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SONG.

All my life is full of passion,
Dumbe-mists drift before my eyes;
But the lurid vapors rise,
And I see, my soul is clear,
Margaret, when thou art near.

Sadness lingers without music,
Without beauty in my heart,
But its folds like rose-leaves part,
Beauty enters, songs I hear,
Margaret, when thou art near.

Tumult frets my restless hours,
Infinite longings unfulfilled;
But my tossing heart is stilled,
Peace glides like an angel near,
When thou art here.

THE GHOST OF NORMAN PARK; OR, Two Women Wronged.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD.

CHAPTER I.

"I wish to-morrow was over and done with!" exclaimed Mitford, the lady's maid, as with a bounce that was intended to represent the last effort of exhausted nature, she flung an immense mass of flounces and furbelows, containing a small nucleus of human being, into an easy chair in the housekeeper's room. "What a dreadful bustle a stylish weddin' does make, to be sure! Oh, dear me! How glad I shall be when we are rattlin' comfortably along the road, with nothin' to do but to look about us and admire the prospect. We are goin' to have postilions, you know, Mrs. Halliday, and post-horses, and part of the way we shall go by rail. So Briggs and ... are to go back except Briggs, and he's to wait here till Sir John and my lady returns from the continent, and then he'll go down to Norman Park with Mr. Smedley. We shall go to Paris first, and then take a carrier and travel all over Italy."

"And what do you want with a carrier, travelling all about in forrin parts?" demanded a husky voice from the doorway.

"Lawks, Mr. Briggs, how you did frighten me!" screamed the sensitive fair one, fanning herself with a newspaper. "Why, don't you know a carrier is a sort of carriage for goin' up and down hills and mountings, and along the rough roads that they have there and all that sort of thing?"

"No, I don't," replied the owner of the gruff voice; "I always thought a carrier was a man what carries hides."

"Oh, dear, no! It's no such a thing, I assure you," said the Abigail with a supercilious toss of the head; "we ain't a goin' to have no nasty creeturs amellin' awful of tan and all sorts along of us, I can tell you! Oh, dear! There's my young lady's bell a-goin'. Oh, deary me! How shall I ever get over this day? Oh, my poor legs, how they do ache!"

"There's plenty of work in her legs yet," observed the old coachman with a grin, as he watched her neat heels tripping lightly up the stairs. "There's not so much weight in her noddle as to bear very hard upon 'um—that's one comfort for her."

"She's a giddy one," responded the housekeeper. "Mr. Smedley, too! Can't she change about at every puff of wind, just like a weathercock? It's been master for these four years, and now he's Mr. Smedley, even before our dear young lady is married. Well, she's welcome to her new master for me; and I only hope she'll have good cause to like him as well as the old one, that's all. But I beg your pardon, Mr. Briggs. I don't mean to say anything disrespectful of Sir John Norman, only it's natural, you see, to feel a little vexed when one sees one's good old master slighted that one has lived with for five and thirty years."

"No offence—no offence in the world, Mrs. Halliday; in fact, when all the botheration is over to-morrow, and we're settled down quiet again, I'll tell you something that hangs heavy on my mind about Sir John. I should like to have your opinion on the matter."

"Can't you just sit down and tell us now?" said the housekeeper, thirsting for a dish of gossip.

"No, no, it's too long a tale," replied Briggs, shaking his head, "and we might be interrupted any moment. But to-morrow, if you'll give me a cup of tea in here by our two selves, I'll tell you all about it."

"You shall have the best cup of tea that ever you tasted in your life," cried Mrs. Halliday, triumphantly.

"You are promising more than you think for," said Briggs, with a responsive grin; "my missus prides herself wonderful upon her tea, particular her gunpowder, and on her muffins, too. It would be hard to beat her at gunpowder and muffins."

"And if there's any two articles in the pharmacopœia that I prides myself upon, Mr. Briggs, it's my gunpowder and my muffins, and to-morrow evening I'll have your candid opinion."

"That I'll give with pleasure, Mrs. Halliday;" and having thus secured his comforts for the morrow, the old coachman strolled away to the stables, leaving the housekeeper to resume her active preparations for the wedding breakfast.

The next day came and went, as days have come and gone ever since the world

SIR JOHN NORMAN REVEALS HIS VILLAINY.

"NOW, MY DEAR KATE," INTERRUPTED SIR JOHN, "DO TALK LIKE A SENSIBLE GIRL, AS YOU ARE; THE LESS YOU SAY ABOUT THAT THE BETTER."

...ceiling; and she stretched out her arms over me, and stared at me with her two eyes, that were brighter than any living being's, and as large as the top of a tea-cup; and she said, in a voice that sounded more like the sighing of the wind through a wood, than anything else, 'Pray for me!' I heard the words as distinctly as I do now I speak them myself. Down on my knees I went, and said my prayers as well as I could remember them—for you may suppose there was not much of that sort of game going on at Norman Park. When I had done, and ventured to look up, my candle was out, and I suppose the ghost was gone, for I'm sure those eyes would have been seen through the darkness if they had been there. I tumbled into my missus's room more dead than alive; and she gave me some brandy, that by good luck she kept there in case of illness. I never could make it out, but she wasn't a bit frightened when I told her what I had seen.

"'There can't be no doubt,' says she, 'but what it was a real ghost; but for goodness' sake don't say a word about it. Sir John mightn't like it; and it's never safe to meddle in great folks's affairs.'

"I've took her advice; and you are the only person I have opened my lips to upon the subject."

"Well, it is a strange story as ever I heard," observed Mrs. Halliday, when the prolix old man had ended his narrative. "My poor young lady! she has but a sad look out, I fear. But we must hope for the best; and perhaps, as she has friends to take care of her, he may treat her with more consideration than he did the other poor thing."

Much more confidential gossip than I have time or space to record, passed between the worthy pair, with only the slight episode of a nice little hot supper, fol...ment of sugar, teaspoons and spirit bottles, ...highly suggestive of "a tumbler ... thing comfortable."

CHAPTER II.

About two months after this, old Briggs accompanied Mr. Smedley to Norman Park.

On the day of her father's arrival, the young bride also first crossed the threshold of her husband's home; light-hearted, beautiful, tender was she; a creature almost

"Too bright and good
For human nature's daily food."

At all events, she was far too good for the husband to whom she was united.

The entire household were speedily enlisted in her favor; even Mrs. Briggs, the housekeeper, who had looked with some asperity on the young creature when she first came, was in a short time so won over by her sweet and unaffected manners, that she was converted into one of her warmest admirers. Sir John Norman appeared devoted to her; and her father, basking in the light that was reflected from her glowing face and beaming eyes, was scarcely less happy than she.

So months passed on. The thick woods that surrounded the domain were clothed in the rich hues of autumn; then the leaves began to drop with a strange melancholy sound through the branches, and settle to rest upon the damp and mossy ground, while the wind moaned faintly among the bare trunks; and with this change in the world without there came a corresponding sadness over the spirit of the old man. He began to think about altering his will. And one day when alone with his son-in-law, he broached the subject, and asked his advice.

Sir John positively refused to give this. He could not, he said, in common decency or delicacy, give advice in a matter that so nearly concerned himself; but he added, that if Mr. Smedley were desirous of legal assistance, he would gladly introduce him to the only honest lawyer whom it had been his fortune to encounter during the many law-transactions in which he had been concerned.

Mr. Smedley willingly availed himself of this proposal, and a messenger was dispatched to the lawyer's residence in the county town, ten miles distant, requesting his presence at Norman Park early on the following morning.

The night which succeeded this day was dark and stormy; yet in the midst of its wildest turmoil the attorney was called up by a man who left his reeking horse inside the gate for two hours, during which time the pair were closeted in secret consultation. By the dim light of a tallow candle, which became yet dimmer as the long snuff formed into a mass, and the thick fetid smoke hung in clouds under the low ceiling of the office, the lawyer and his client talked in eager, but muffled tones.

But little could be seen of the face or figure of the latter, for in addition to the collar of his riding cloak, which reached nearly to his eyes, he had tied down the flaps of his fur travelling cap, and wore a pair of dark-green spectacles, thus leaving no feature visible but a bold aquiline nose, and the strongly marked curve of a thin upper lip. The lawyer, however, seemed to have had no difficulty in recognizing him, though in obedience to the visitor's injunction he forbore to address him by name. Being in his own office, the man of law had no motive for concealment, and the yellow light shone full upon his yellow face, bald crown and receding forehead. His small twinkling eyes looked cunning and avaricious, and he rubbed his large

...ness of all sorts. Lord love you! when he used to have a set of his grand town friends down at the Park, what a piece of work there was all over the country! Everybody seemed like to be driven stark, raving mad, they kept up such a stir. It's now just upon seven year a-gone, while he was up in London, or out on the rampage somewheres, for when he went away from home we never knew where he'd go to, for he kept no town house, being a bachelor, but just had his chambers in the Albany, and took no servants with him except his valet" (sounding the t distinctly). "Well, he sends down word to my missis to have the best suite of rooms put in order for

...down with him next day. He didn't say in the letter she was his wife, but when they came he called her Lady Norman, and so of course we all did the same. And though some had their doubts about her, nobody liked to speak them out, she was such a sweet, modest creetur, and at last I believe there wasn't one in the house that didn't believe she was really my lady.

"She was very pretty, and at first seemed always happy when she was along with Sir John, and as long as he was kind to her, though she was always shy and timid. As for Sir John hisself, it seemed he couldn't be happy a moment away from her. But that lasted only a few weeks, and then he seemed to grow tired of the dull life they led, for they received no company, and never visited any of the neighboring families; and it was that, you see, that made us suspect, more than anythink, that he only called her 'my lady' for the sake of appearances. She knew this too, and no doubt had said something to him about it, when he was heard to say, 'since you wish for company, you shall have enough of it. I will write by to-day's post and invite some friends from London.' You should have seen how pleased the poor young thing looked for a day or two, till the visitors came. Then indeed she looked uncomfortable enough, for they were all gentlemen, and some of them were the greatest scamps about town.

"There was one, however, who was different from the rest. He had been a college chum of Sir John's, and they had only just met again after many years. He had made a large fortune by practicing medicine in India, and had come home and given up his profession. His name was Waldron—Dr. Waldron. We soon found out that he was not like the rest of them; and though he had a haughty, stand-offish sort of a way with him, that kept everybody at a distance, there was not one in the house but would have trusted him, and run to him in case of need. Well, whether the lady found fault with Sir John or not, I cannot exactly say; but there seemed to be a coolness between them from that time, and she kept out of the way of the visitors as much as possible, though there was one of them—a Major Dashwood—who never left her side if he could help it; and I'm ashamed to say Sir John threw them together as much as he could. Everybody saw that. And so matters stood, when one evening I wanted to find out a pedigree, so I went into the library when they were all out and took 'The Peerage' and sat down in one of the great old chairs in a deep bay window. It is a curious thing that whenever I begin to read I always fall asleep, and so I fell asleep then, and I had slept, goodness only knows how long, when I was roused by the sound of people talking very loud and quarrelling. When I opened my eyes I found it was pitch dark, except for a candle which they had at the other side of the room. The first voice that I knew was Dr. Waldron's.

"'I tell you, Sir John,' says he, 'that I will not see this young creature sold without warning her of your treachery. Be she Lady Norman or be she not, she is much too good for you or for that villain, Dashwood, either.'

"'Who doubts my being Lady Norman?' cried the lady's voice, very indignantly. 'I have the certificate to prove my marriage.'

"'Now, my dear Kate,' interrupted Sir John, 'do talk like a sensible girl, as you are; the less you say about that the better.'

"'Do you mean to insinuate that I am not married to you?' says she.

"'Come, come now, do be cool,' says Sir John, coaxing her as he would coax a skit-

...for there was a kind of sneer in his tone that sounded as if he was laughing at her all the time.

"'Wait here a moment,' she said, with her voice trembling with anger; 'I will fetch the certificate and confute such vile insinuations.'

"Out she went, and then Sir John began to laugh out loud.

"'By the Lord Harry!' says he, 'how splendidly she acts! Would not any one believe that she really had the certificate safely locked up? I'll bet you a cool hundred now that she comes back in five minutes, and accuses me of having stolen it.'

"I'd have given anything just then to get a look at Dr. Waldron's face, but I durstn't for my life as much as stir a finger for fear of being found out. Well—soon after I heard the door open, but no one spoke.

"'Well, my dear, have you found your marriage-certificate?' says Sir John, at last.

"'It is gone!' she cried, in such a hollow voice that I should not have known it to be hers. 'It is gone! I have lost my last hope! Oh, Sir John, if you have taken it—if you know anything about it—for pity's sake restore it to me!'

"'Tut—tut,' says he, 'why should I take it away? Can't you get another by writing to the parish clerk where we were married?'

"'Do you not know that I never heard the name of that place?'

"'But you must have read it in the certificate,' says he.

"'Do you not recollect that you threw some ink over it just as I was going to read it, and that the names of the clerk, the clergyman and the place were completely blotted out?'

"Sir John burst out into a loud laugh again.

"'The most wonderful thing in nature,' says he, 'is certainly the ready wit of woman! But it's of no use, Kate—it's of no use, Dr. Waldron is a man of the world, and cannot be blinded even by such consummate acting as yours. Come now, be pacified, my little duck.'

"'Do not dare to touch me,' she shrieked out, 'you base, detestable traitor.'

"'Very well,' says he, in a quiet, provoking way, that was much worse than swearing at her. 'I'll put my hands into my pockets; go on calling me as many names as you like, if it is any comfort to you. I don't mind it.'

"'You execrable villain!' she cried; 'but no, I'll not speak to you—it is useless. But you, Dr. Waldron, surely you do not believe these falsehoods? You cannot believe I am the degraded creature that that wretch would endeavor to prove me?'

"'Madam,' says Dr. Waldron, 'you make my position a very painful one by asking that question so pointedly. I must either believe my old friend and fellow-student guilty of the most atrocious criminality, or I must give credence to the not very improbable story of a young lady of great beauty, but, as I understand, of humble birth, having been enticed from the strict path of prudence by the fascinations of a handsome and accomplished gentleman—whichever may be the truth does not concern me. I have attained my object in opening your eyes to Sir John's intentions and warning you against falling into the hands of Major Dashwood. Whether you are the clever actress that Sir John says you are, or the innocent and inexperienced girl that I have hitherto supposed you to be, it is impossible for me to decide. But this I do know; you are a persecuted woman, and as such you have a claim upon the sympathy and assistance of every right-minded man, which I, to

...Therefore, madam, if I can be of any service to you, pray command me.'

"'Your suspending your judgment shows me too clearly that you believe my base accuser. I would sooner perish than accept help so offered. Sir John Norman—husband—farewell forever.'

"I shall never forget the way in which she said those words. The tone of her voice when she said 'husband' convinced me that she was a cruelly-wronged woman. She lingered upon it as if it was a name she had loved and taken pride in, and was determined never to utter again. I suppose she left the room as she said that, for I heard her voice no more, and the two gentlemen began chatting about her. I remarked that Sir John tried to make Dr. Waldron give an opinion as to which he thought was in the right, but the doctor was mighty cautious, and avoided saying anything one way or the other. He told Sir John he was obliged to return home on particular business, and that to meet the coach he must start before daybreak the next morning, so he would bid him adieu then, thanking him for his hospitality, and desiring him to excuse him to his friends. I didn't believe a word about his particular business; the plain fact was, he was disgusted with the goings-on of the whole set, and wanted to be quit of them. Away they went at last, and off I crept in the dark, and found my old woman in an awful fright, not knowing what had become of me. However, all went right when she found I was safe. So I told her what I had heard, and very much was she struck with it.

"Well, next morning, there was a whisper all over the house that the lady was gone. Sir John looked very pale at first, and ran about over the house and grounds like one distracted, seeking for her. I saw him go to the sideboard and drink off a tumbler-full of wine, and after that he seemed to care no more about her, but talked to his companions, so that the servants could hear all he said, about the oddness of Dr. Waldron's disappearing at the same time. He never mentioned that the doctor had bid him adieu the night before, so the whole affair looked as if the lady had run away with him. But Sir John knew better. She had taken neither clothes, nor jewels, nor money; and often have I seen him, when he's been alone and out of spirits, wandering along beside the river, and looking down into the deep holes as though he expected to see her long, brown hair entangled among the water-lilies. As sure as I'm a living man, he felt he had the weight of her young blood upon his conscience. Her body was never found, nor was anything heard of her; but there can't be a doubt that she made away with herself, for"—and here the old man whispered mysteriously into the ear of his attentive auditor—"she has been seen!"

"No!" was the awe-struck rejoinder.

"She has, though," he asserted, confidentially; "me and several of the gamekeepers has seen her more than once about the park and gardens; and one night—I never shall forget it—I was going to bed, and I had only the snuff of a candle to light me through a long, dreary passage with old-fashioned rooms on each side of it. Some were used as store and lumber-rooms, and some had been shut up ever since the time of Sir John's grandfather, because they were haunted. In the middle of this passage, just by the door of one of the haunted rooms, I met a tall female figure dressed all in gray, and when I looked close, sure enough it was Lady Norman. She looked very pale, and was nearly as tall as the

and very dirty hands with satisfaction as his visitor unfolded the business in which he required his professional assistance.

"It may be done! It may be done well!" he exclaimed.

"It must be done," replied the other. "Such an arrangement as he contemplates would be ruination."

"You are sure you made no mistake about the disposition of the property?" suggested the lawyer.

"Mistake!" repeated the client, with a derisive laugh, "is it likely I should make a mistake in such a matter? I had ample time to read all the old fool's notes and memoranda after he went to bed. What does he suppose I married his doll-faced daughter for, that he seeks to cheuse me out of the best part of his money?"

"Yet he came down very handsome with the marriage settlements."

"Pretty fair—pretty fair. But that's a mere pinch of snuff to the bulk of his property. I had no notion the old fellow was so rich as these notes of his show him to be. And he actually means to leave it all to her, safely tied up, so that I cannot touch it, and then to be equally divided among her children! And after doing this, he had the confounded impudence to tell me, when he bade me good-night, that he believed he had made such an arrangement as would entirely meet with my approval! A fine thing it would be to have shackled myself with a wife for the sake of her money, and to lose it after all! By Jove, it's too bad! But we'll be even with the old fox yet—eh, Downey?"

"My good sir, I'll undertake that his goose shall be cooked in first-rate style," chuckled the ugly lawyer; "and the remuneration to the cook was to be, I think you said, my good sir, a little per centage of five-and-twenty on the total profit."

"Five-and-twenty!" exclaimed the visitor; "hang it, Downey, have a conscience, man! Fifteen was what I said."

"But just consider the risk, my dear friend—the extreme danger of scalding and burning one's fingers in the very delicate operation—the tact required in the seasoning—the nice appreciation, not only of what to do, but when to do it."

"I think I have marked out what you have to do, with tolerable accuracy," said the client, "and for risk," he added, moodily, "mine will be greater than yours before all is done. I'll stick to my offer—fifteen, or throw up the job."

"Well, then, suppose you give me a bill for five thousand, payable in three months?"

"What a precious fool you must take me for?" said the client; "no—no—Downey. I'll not commit myself to you on paper. How could I account for having given you such a document? No, my good friend, I'll do nothing so foolish. I'll be perfectly candid with you in speech, for I don't believe the devil himself could propose any scheme of rascality that would astonish you, or shock your sense of honor; but I will not give you one word in writing that will give you power over me. It is my interest to get hold of this money, and yours to help me to it. I'll give you fifteen per cent. on whatever you turn into my hands. Why, you may make the sum enormous!"

"Well, well," replied the lawyer, with a sigh of resignation, "I'll undertake the business on those terms. It will be a great satisfaction to the good old gentleman to have made a comfortable disposition of his property; especially if any little accident should happen to him soon afterward. If he should happen to slip in the very best regulated families." And as he said this, his eyes twinkled knowingly and knavishly over his spectacles.

"What devil has been whispering to you?" cried the visitor, starting up with clenched fist, as though he would have struck the lawyer to the earth.

"Oh, no devil at all," replied Downey, with a laugh; "I've been studying the doctrine of chances and probabilities lately, nothing more, and I find that the chances of the old gentleman's sudden death soon after making such a will under such circumstances are just about one to one; and as this means, in the present case, one active, strong and resolute man, urged on by the prospect of gain, to one old, weak and unsuspicious man, who has unbounded faith in the honor of his son-in-law, the chances are diminished almost to a certainty. He! he! he! Have I made a shrewd calculation?"

"I don't know what the deuce you are driving at," muttered the client, pulling his cap further over his brows, "and I've no time to waste in guessing riddles. But you understand this, I suppose, that you shall have fifteen per cent. upon all the money you can persuade the old gentleman to leave me, and to which you must own I have an undoubted right; and this per centage shall be paid to you as soon as I have the property in my own hands."

"And nothing in advance!" cried Downey; "nothing to carry on the war!"

"Don't I begin by putting a good job into your hands, you old cormorant?"

"That's all very well," said the lawyer, "but still a little ready cash would be acceptable. A twenty-pound note, for instance, would be of great service to me just now."

"I cannot comprehend how you manage it, Downey," replied the client, taking out his pocket-book; "you are forever engaged in dirty work for somebody or other, and such work is always well paid, and yet, according to your own account, you are in perpetual hot water. How do you manage it?"

"My case," said the lawyer, sententiously, "is one which proves that, without the adventitious glitter of worldly renown, even industry and talent will fail to secure prosperity to their possessor."

"Confounded old humbug!" said the client, as he gave him the money, "will that satisfy you?"

"A thousand thanks, my dear sir," replied Downey, pocketing the notes with great glee. "Shall I light you to the door?"

"No, confound you!" was the polite rejoinder; "do you think I wish to be seen coming out of your den at this hour? I've even taken a horse that's not known about the country, to avoid being recognized, and now you'd show me up to the neighborhood. Keep all dark, and make no noise with the door. Be punctual in the morning. Good-night."

He crossed the little court with a stealthy step, led forth his horse with the utmost caution, mounted, and galloped furiously away, while the lawyer retired, chuckling, to his dormitory.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning, while Mrs. Briggs, in the execution of her official duties, was issuing her orders in the kitchen, one of the grooms staggered in from the stable-yard, and dropped into the nearest chair. His face was livid with terror, and his teeth chattered like a pair of castanets.

"What's the matter, Tom Warren?" was the simultaneous cry of all except the housekeeper, who cast on him a glance of mingled anxiety and vexation.

"The ghost!" faltered Tom; "the ghost! I seen it in the stable, with my own eyes, a-rubbing down of Gray Meg?"

"Lord ha' mercy on us!" cried the frightened servants.

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Briggs. "Take a drop of brandy, Tom, and find your senses."

Tom made no objection to the brandy, but he could not find his senses.

"I seen it," he solemnly asseverated, "I seen it standing alongside of Meg in the stall, and brushing of her down with the horse-brush, and crying and sobbing quite loud; I heard the sobs as plain as I ever heard anythink in my born days; and there was Meg a-laying of her head over the ghostisse's shoulder, and whinnying just as she used to do; though I should have thought a horse would have had more sense than to take a ghost for a Christian."

"What did it look like, Tom?" asked the cook, who believed and trembled.

"Look like!" repeated Tom. "You needn't ask that, cook, for you've seed her often enough. She's just like what she was, only paler, and thinner, and a wonderful sight taller, and she's dressed like no earthly woman, in something that's like gray clouds floating about her."

"The Lord preserve us!" ejaculated the cook.

"When do you say this happened?" asked Mrs. Briggs, sternly.

"I don't know," replied the groom, looking quite dazed, "it was barely light when I went out—and the fright I got consensed me, and I fell down, and lay I don't know how long; but when I come to myself, there I was laying on the ground just inside the stable. So I picks myself up as well as I could, and comes in here; and I don't know but what I've got my death-warning."

"Death Biddlesticks!" retorted the housekeeper, contemptuously, "I do believe you are a natural-born idiot, Thomas Warren. Come along to the stables, and I'll soon find out what this ghost is."

"I dussn't go back there again, for my life!" cried the terror-stricken groom.

"Then stay where you are, for a fool," she replied. "Will any one else come?"

"I dursn't," said the cook, with a shudder.

"I will, Mrs. Briggs," said one of the footmen.

"So will I," said another.

"I'll go too," said the butler.

"And so will I, if you'll take me under your purtection, Mr. Timpson," said the head-housemaid to the last-named official.

Mr. Timpson offered his arm to the courageous fair one, with the grace of an ambassador; and their example being generally imitated, the entire household paired off in the train of the heroic Mrs. Briggs, with the exception of Tom Warren and the cook; and even these, either inspired by a little Dutch courage or feeling safer in a crowd, soon started after them, and reached the stable just as the housekeeper was pointing in derision to a horse-cloth which hung near the manger in such a manner that it bore some faint resemblance to a human figure.

"There's the ghost," she exclaimed, while a burst of laughter arose at Tom's expense; "Oh! I'm glad you are come, Tom Warren! What do you think of your ghost now? The next time you want a drop of brandy come and ask for it like a man, and don't turn the house upside down with tales about ghosts."

"I didn't do it for the sake of the brandy then?"

"I said it because I seen it," said Tom, his vehemence increasing with the renewed laughter that assailed him, "and that there horse-cloth ain't what frit me neither, and I'd like to know who put it there. Somebody done it."

"Ah! well," said the provoking Mrs. Briggs, "I suppose we are all satisfied by this time, so we'll return to business, if you please. The work of the house must not stand still every time somebody hangs a horse-cloth in a wrong place."

With a stately step she headed the retreat upon the ghost's territory, as she had led the assault; poor Tom coming rather sheepishly in the rear, for after all he did not much relish being left alone in the stable.

Old Briggs had joined them on the way, observing all that occurred, but not uttering a syllable. When his wife, having issued her orders in the kitchen, entered her own parlor, she found him gazing at the fire, with a countenance laden with thought.

"What's up, John Brigge?" inquired his helpmate.

John shook his head, sighed heavily, and began to fill his pipe. When this was accomplished he continued, with an air of abstraction, pressing the tobacco into the bowl, with his eyes fixed upon the flames that danced upon the polished bars.

"What art thinking of?" again demanded his wife.

"I'm thinking," replied the coachman, "how you always do throw cold water upon that ghost, my dear. When I met it in the lobby that night—and to my dying day I'll swear that I did meet it, say what you please to the contrary,—didn't you try to make me believe black was white, and that it was nothing but a cloak hanging up by the wall? And when it's been seen in the park or the gardens, haven't you always been ready to prove it was only a gray willow bush, or the stem of a silver-birch tree, or one of the maids out larking? And now this morning again—just the same tune! But there's one thing I should like to know. I should like to know—ghost or no ghost—who rode the mare almost to death?"

"Mayhap some folks could tell you better than me, John. And I should like to know where the master was all last night. If there is such a thing as a ghost about the place, and if Tom Warren saw it, it must be a kind-hearted thing that nobody need be afraid of, or it wouldn't have been crying over the poor beast that used to be her own favorite, when it had been used so cruelly. Now you mark my words, it was Sir John himself rode that horse, and a nasty, spiteful trick it was of him, and bad luck to the devil's errand he was out upon!"

"Then why won't you agree to leave his service?" said her husband. "There's the Norman Arms to be sold, freehold, good-will, fixtures and all, and we've saved up money enough to buy it twice over. Why won't you leave this place, since you've taken such a hatred against Sir John?"

"If I were free to tell you, John Briggs, your honest old heart would make you stay, though we got no more wages. But I can't tell you, because other people are concerned, and the secret's not my own. Yet I do wish—"

She remained a moment in deep cogitation; then with a sudden exclamation that she had forgotten something of importance, and telling her husband on no account to stir till she returned, she hastily quitted the room. He smoked away placidly till she came back.

"Now," said Mrs. Brigge, taking from a drawer a venerable looking Bible with silver clasps, "here is your mother's Bible, John Brigge, and I want you to swear upon it that you will never tell any living soul what I am going to say to you."

"I'll swear to that, for I'm quite sure you would not lead me into doing anything wrong, wife," replied Briggs, kissing the book devoutly, though he looked somewhat awe-struck at this solemn adjuration.

With one hand on his shoulder, she stooped and whispered in his ear.

Down went the pipe, and up started old Briggs, hands, eyes and mouth all opened to their utmost extent.

"You don't mean to say that?" he exclaimed.

"Hush—hush—not a word for your life!" cried his wife, interrupting him; "it's a fact, as you shall see for yourself presently."

"I shall be almost afraid," he said, turning pale.

"Now, don't talk about it, or look as if you knew anything," she said in a tone of urgent expostulation, "but go yourself and look after Gray Meg. She had a bottle of wine soon after she came in, poor beast. I think I never did—no, not after the hardest hunt or steeple chase—see a creature so knocked up as that poor thing was. It's a sinful shame, so it is, to use any horse so, and a wicked, spiteful trick to choose that horse of all others in the stable."

"I'll go out—permiskous as it were—and see to her," said he, moving off with considerable alacrity. "Lord! Lord! What wonderful things do come to pass in this world, to be sure!"

CHAPTER IV.

Precisely at ten o'clock came Mr. Downey and a blue bag, and for some hours he was occupied with Mr. Smedley in the library.

More than once during this time Sir John Norman passed by the door, pausing and listening if no one was by to observe him; and each time he heard the dry, cackling chuckle of the attorney and the hearty laugh of the old gentleman.

"He's on the right tack," he muttered. "I know to my cost that when Downey gets a client to laugh with him, he is sure to be cheating him infernally."

Mr. Smedley at length came forth, talking in a cheerful voice to the attorney, who followed, bowing and chuckling and rubbing his dirty hands.

"What a comical fellow he is!" said the old man to his son-in-law as he met him on the stairs. "Gad, I never thought I could laugh so much over making my will! He has made quite a funny affair of it."

"He is a first-rate lawyer, notwithstanding," said the baronet. "I am sorry he should have been so full of his oddities this morning, for I fear he may have caused you to think meanly of my judgment in recommending him."

"Not at all—not at all," replied Mr. Smedley, good-humoredly. "I see that he understands his profession well. Amid all his jokes, he never lost sight of business."

"Of that I'll be sworn," muttered Sir John. "Hallo, Downey," he called out, as that individual crossed the hall, "have you brought Houghton's lease with you?" And with a friendly nod he passed Mr. Smedley, and ran down to the library. "Well, what luck?" he demanded, hastily closing the door.

"Famous!" replied the attorney. "Nothing could be better managed. Come here and I'll tell you all about it; I brought with me two parchments, ready for them, instead of intrusting it to a clerk. Do you understand? If I found him reasonable, by which I mean disposed to leave the bulk of his property to you, I intended to write the will on an ordinary parchment, and get it signed and sealed before he could decently alter his mind. If, however, I found him bent on adhering to his first idea of leaving it to Lady Norman, I then meant to use the other parchment, which I had prepared for such an emergency. This consists of two thin sheets pasted together, but the under one projects two or three inches beyond the upper. It is a dodge that one could not try on with any one having a sharp pair of eyes, for the join might be detected, however neatly done. It was well I came so prepared, for I found him as obstinate as a mule. I wrote the will on the upper sheet. He signed his name on the lower one. If he should happen to be taken off by a fit of apoplexy, or an overdose of soothing syrup, or any trifle of that sort, I must happen to be at hand. You will ostentatiously put seals upon the drawer where his papers are locked up, and then give me the seal. Or stay—have you two seals exactly alike?"

"Yes, I have a duplicate of this sealing, which I always wear."

"Then I'll put you up to a bit of stage effect that will tell well upon the servants; and let me tell you it is always important to secure their good word. Many years of Old Bailey practice has convinced me of it. Now this is the bit of stage effect:—Seal up the drawer, and then, with a neat little melo-dramatic speech, which you must have at your tongue's end, about the sacred nature of a dead man's will, and so forth, you know—something pretty, and glittering and clap-trap—throw the ring upon the floor, and grind it under your heel. It will be very effective."

"I'll see about it," said Sir John, whose dark brow had gathered yet a deeper gloom, while his lips became paler and thinner beneath the close compressure of some desperate resolve. "I'll see about it," he added, abstractedly.

"Ay, do," said the lawyer; "and the sooner you see about that other matter, too, the better. Delay is now doubly dangerous. This has been a cloudy day, but to-morrow may be bright, and if the old fellow should look too closely at his will, and find out the join, where are we? Irretrievably and irrecoverably dished, my good sir. Whereas, if all goes well, I shall spend to-morrow night in the pleasant task of filling up the blank parchment to which the dear old gentleman's signature is attached, in any way that you may think proper to command."

"To-morrow," said Sir John, grinding a cinder into the Turkey carpet beneath his heel, "to-morrow we purpose riding round the park, and talking over some improvements that he wishes me to make."

"Very good," observed Downey, "accidents sometimes happen to elderly gentlemen when riding over broken ground."

A sound that was half-growl and half-groan escaped Sir John Norman's lips as he turned abruptly away and strode through the hall.

"Just as you please, Sir John," said the lawyer in a loud voice, and with the air of one who was continuing a conversation; "then I will ride over to-morrow and draw up the leases. I fear I shall not be able to come till the afternoon, as I have a case to attend to in the morning; but that will be in time, I believe, sir?"

"Yes, yes," replied Sir John, hastily; "and, Downey, as it will be late, perhaps, before you have finished, you had better stay all night."

As he said these apparently unimportant words, the baronet became ghastly pale, and though his face was turned toward the attorney, his blood-shot and unsteady eyes shrank from encountering his cunning leer.

"Very good," replied Downey, emphatically; "to-morrow be it, then. I'll not fail."

He mounted his horse and departed.

Sir John seemed to breathe more freely when he was gone, and in half an hour was as gay as ever.

In the course of the evening it was arranged that Mr. Smedley should ride with him round the estate on the following morning, as the old gentleman had an amiable mania for redeeming waste land, and letting it out on the allotment system. Sir John feigned some objections to the proposed excursion, but when rallied by his father-in-law and obliged to confess that his reluctance had no better foundation than a vague presentiment of evil, he yielded with a good grace, and agreed to set off soon after breakfast.

(To be continued in our next.)

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER LII.

PAST REDEMPTION.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive.—*Scott.*

A silence as of death filled the apartment as Alma sank back with rigid limbs upon the couch.

"Is she—is she—dead?" said Lord Nortonshall, with a face from which every vestige of color had fled.

Now, now, when it was too late to undo his work, a pang of remorse seized on his heart and choked his utterance, and it was with difficulty that his parched tongue framed the syllables.

"Is she dead?" he repeated.

"Hush," said Claudia, who stood looking intently at the still, cold form so lately full of life, and she lifted the eyelid as she spoke, to get a glimpse of the eye beneath.

"By Jove! she takes it coolly," said his lordship, inwardly, as he observed Claudia's calm demeanor.

He himself was trembling as though with a fit of ague.

"What shall we do now?" he said, piteously, all his courage and sense totally vanished at the sight of what lay there before him.

"You should have thought of that before," answered Claudia, scornfully. "I suppose you have calculated your chances."

"Curse it! don't sneer at me; but say what is best to be done."

"Done? Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Exactly," she replied, with the same imperturbable coolness which had so astonished him before.

"Confound it! Something must be done," he said, trembling with excitement. "We cannot leave her—it—there, and take no notice."

"Of course not. You will have to raise an alarm, be profoundly affected, full of grief for the loss of your beloved wife, and all that sort of thing."

"But—but what shall I say?"

"I really can't advise. Manage about that the best way you can. I should certainly send for a doctor, if I were you."

"A doctor?"

"Yes. Of course, it's a mere matter of form."

"Yes, yes; you are right," he said, huskily, and was moving toward the door, when she stopped him.

"Not yet," she said.

"Why?" he inquired, in a bewildered tone.

"Because—I see that you are not fit to decide for yourself," she answered, "so I must e'en help you, I suppose. Because, then, you had better go to your own room first, and collect yourself before you give the alarm. Send for a doctor in an hour's time, not before. Who is your medical man?"

"Jeffson; but he's out of town."

"Let me recommend one to you, then. Doctor Bleckton."

"Why him?" he asked, suspiciously.

"Because I think he's not likely to ask any awkward questions. Will you have him?"

"Yes; I'll send Brown."

"Very well. By the by, you'd better rinse out that coffee-cup and place it with the others. It might tell tales."

Lord Nortonshall obeyed her mechanically. He seemed as if in a dream, and felt almost terrified at the *sang froid* of his companion.

"So far all's safe," she said, when he had finished; "and now I will go."

"No, no."

"I must. What would be said if it were known that I was here, in your house, at this hour? Ah, I was almost forgetting the other people. Who are they?"

"The—the other people?"

"Yes, the undertakers."

He recoiled in terror.

"Great heaven!" he muttered, "has she no feelings?"

He looked at her with almost loathing in his gaze, as man might look at a venomous serpent, with a horror tempered by admiration for its beauty. He, a strong man, felt sick and terrified almost to fainting, while here was this fragile, delicate girl entering into the minutest details directly after being his accomplice in an act of murder.

"The—the undertakers!" he stammered.

"Yes. I suppose you are not going to act the devoted, loving husband to such an extent as to refuse letting her be taken from you?" she answered, in the same cold, hard tone she had used all along.

"No. Wishaw's the man."

"Oh, the upholsterer's in Regent street," she said. "And now, my lord, I must go. I must get out without being seen. Only one of your servants knows I am here."

"Who is that?"

"A man who can be silent—Brown. He will never think that I have been in these rooms—so let me out of yours."

He made a gesture as though to embrace her; but she avoided him with a shudder.

"No, no, not yet," she said. "Let that"—pointing to the bed as she spoke—"be put out of sight first. Come, let me out."

He opened the door silently, and they passed into the front of the house, hardly daring to cast a glance at the bed with its silent occupant.

"You will come back again?" he asked.

"Yes. Let Brown go with me now," said Claudia; and, indeed, she felt she could not go far without support.

"Certainly," replied his lordship.

They had reached the study, where he rang the bell, and Brown quickly came in obedience to the summons. He cast a deprecating glance at Claudia, but soon discovered that she had not betrayed his absence to Lord Nortonshall, who ordered him to accompany Mademoiselle Claudia to her house.

"Of course you will not drop a hint that you know anything of what has happened," his lordship whispered to Claudia, as they parted at the door.

"Have no fear," she replied, in the same tone. "Keep your own counsel—I will keep mine. Heaven grant that I may not have blundered," she continued to herself, as she followed Brown along the passage. "I must keep my senses."

But she could not help turning faint and dizzy when she reached the street, and the fresh morning air blew upon her cheeks. The fog had cleared partially, and hurrying clouds showed that the work of London had commenced; and Brown, alarmed at the death-like pallor of Claudia's face, asked her if he should call a cab.

"No," she replied, faintly; "I shall be better soon. Give me your arm. Nay, do not hesitate," she continued, seeing that he looked astonished at her request. "No one will know who or what I am with my veil down."

She drew it over her face as she spoke, and taking Brown's arm, they walked silently on until they were out of sight of the house, when she suddenly stopped, and turning sharply round to the astonished valet, said—

"You asked me to be silent for your sake this morning. I have the same request to make of you now."

"Of me, mademoiselle?"

"Take me somewhere—I don't care where—that I may talk to you for five minutes without being overheard."

"Hat, mademoiselle—"

"No words. It is a matter of life or death to more than me."

The astonished reply he would have made to this strange request was checked upon his lips by a glimpse he obtained of her face. It seemed to have aged by years since he had let her into the house some two hours back, and thoroughly frightened, he led her without speaking another word, to a quiet public-house in a by-street off the Strand, and saying a few words in an undertone to the landlady, opened the door of a little parlor behind the bar, into which he showed Claudia, and following her, bolted the door behind them.

"Now, mademoiselle," he said, "no one can interrupt us here. Let me know how I can serve you."

"Make sure that no one is listening," she said.

"You need have no fear," answered Brown. "I know the house."

"I want you to help me in a great difficulty," she said, when he had satisfied her, and taking a purse from her pocket, she selected a bank-note from it, which she laid upon the table.

"There is a hundred pounds," she continued. "Will you earn it?"

Brown was completely bewildered, and could make no answer.

"I require your help in a most difficult matter, and that note shall be yours if you will give it me. Can you be safe and secret?"

"Try me, mademoiselle."

"And you will not betray me? Swear it!"

He hesitated before making any answer.

"I don't like binding myself to do anything without knowing what it is," he said.

"I will not ask you. Only promise me that, whether you consent or no, you will not tell anybody else."

"There is no harm in it?"

"None, on my soul. It is a good object upon my honor, and will save much misery."

"I promise, then."

"Faithfully."

"Yes, mademoiselle," he answered, quietly. "I never break my word."

"I'll trust you, then. Listen. The moment what I wish is accomplished, that note is yours. Now attend to what I have to tell you. Make no exclamation of surprise, no noise, till I have finished."

The buxom landlady of the Cross Keys could not hear one word of the communication, though her ear was glued persistently to the keyhole all the time, excepting when she took a peep by way of interlude. She could see nothing except that the veiled lady was talking very earnestly to Mr. Brown, and that he looked very agitated and uneasy.

It was certainly a great disappointment to the hostess, for she smelt a secret, and would have given something to find it out. She dilated upon the circumstance to her gossips afterward with many conjectures of her own, which, of course, were very far from the truth.

"I assure you," she said, talking over the bar to a well-known customer, "that he came out of that there parlor as white as a sheet, and his eyes a-rolling as though he had seen a ghost, and then he called a cab for the lady, and handed her in as though she had been a duchess."

"What was she like?" asked her listener.

"Ah, that's more than I can say, for her veil was down, and that thick that I couldn't see a bit of her face nohow."

"But didn't you hear what directions he gave to the driver?"

"Bless your soul, no. He spoke that low I couldn't catch a word, and then he walked away without so much as having a glass or saying good-morning, though he behaved handsome enough about the room, I must say, for he gave me half a sovereign for the use of it, and a quarter of an hour was all the time they was there."

Much was the landlady's lamentation over the mysterious interview which had taken place in her house; but she never got to arrive at the cause of Brown's extreme agitation.

"You will be sure and keep your promise?" Claudia had said to him out of the window of the cab.

"Depend upon me, mademoiselle."

"Remember how much depends upon your silence. For the present, farewell!"

And the cab drove off with the pale woman, leaving the bewildered valet striving to realize the story he had just been hearing.

"No use in standing here," he said, rousing from the revery into which he had fallen. "I must set about my part of the work at once."

And he started back to his master's house, which he found all in confusion and dismay.

"What is the matter?" he asked of the housekeeper.

"Matter—matter enough! Poor dear Lady Nortonshall is lying dead up-stairs."

"Dead?" he repeated, in as well-assumed a tone of surprise as he could summon.

"Yes. My lord has sent for the doctor, but it's no use. The poor lady is past all help."

CHAPTER LIII.

BROKEN DOWN.

And thou art terrible—the tear,
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
Of agony are thine. —*Halleck.*

Claudia Wynne sat back in the cab which Brown had secured for her, her brain all in a whirl, and feeling as though, if the present tension of her nerves were not speedily removed, she should lose her senses. It was with a shuddering horror she recalled the scene she had so lately witnessed, and the dread at her heart lest, notwithstanding the efforts she had made, Alma should indeed have fallen a victim to her husband's inveterate hatred.

"But no, I will not trust myself to think of such a contingency," she murmured; "the idea is too fearful. I think, if such a thing should be, it would go far to kill me—not that I am long for this world," she continued, wistfully regarding her thin hands. Then, shaking off the thoughts which oppressed her, she put her head out of the window, and urged the driver to greater speed. "I must not risk his departure before I see him," she thought.

It was to Dr. Bleckton's house that she was going now, and although she had secured the co-operation of Brown in the scheme which she had mapped out, Claudia was half-inclined to mistrust the valet's fidelity, though he had so solemnly promised to aid, and not betray her.

But in Dr. Bleckton she felt assured of a faithful and, what was more important, an able coadjutor. He was a poor man, struggling by the side of his more fortunate brethren to make a practice, and keep up the appearance necessary for such a purpose. Claudia had consulted him for herself, and knew him to be a kindly-disposed, warm-hearted man. She was also aware of his poverty, and trusted to secure his aid by means of a liberal *douceur*.

Her heart was beating at railroad pace when she stopped at the doctor's door, and a cold perspiration stood in great beads upon her forehead.

"Is Dr. Bleckton at home?" she asked, hurriedly, when the door was opened.

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered the old servant, who knew her well.

"I wish to see him immediately," she went on, with a sigh of relief, as she stepped from the cab, and bidding the driver wait for her, went into the house.

The doctor was not long in making his appearance, and showed not a little concern at her pale face and evident illness, though he was surprised she had not sent for him, instead of calling at so early an hour, and he took her gently to task for her imprudence.

"Why did you not let me know?" he asked. "I would have gone to you instantly. It was very foolish of you to venture out in your present state."

"I know—I know," she replied, scarcely able to contend against the hysterical rising in her throat; "but it is not for myself I seek your assistance, it is for—"

"Stop for a moment," he interrupted, authoritatively, and regarding her with an earnest look; "whether you came on your own account or no, I must prescribe for you before anything else. Have you eaten anything this morning?"

"No."

"So I thought. You are faint now, and will break down if you don't take something."

"I couldn't," she said; "a crumb would choke me now. Besides, I have no time to spare—every moment is of value."

But the strain had been too great, and she burst into a passion of tears as she spoke, for she was completely overcome.

Dr. Bleckton did not attempt to soothe her—he knew it was better for nature to take her own way; but he went to a small cupboard in the room from whence he took a small bottle and glass, and pouring out a few drops of the liquid it contained, he added a little water to it, and gave it to her.

"Come, drink this," he said to her; "it will restore you. Nay—I won't hear a word till you have obeyed my orders."

He was imperative, and she took the draught, feeling the necessity of using some means to regain her self-control, and in a very little while she was able to collect her thoughts, and speak more coherently.

As with Brown, the story she told produced a very strange effect upon the doctor, though he listened to all she had to say without interruption; but he was sorely puzzled, and half-inclined to believe that his visitor had suddenly grown a little mad.

"It is a strange tale, mademoiselle," he said; "a very strange tale."

"It is only too true."

"Indeed, I do not doubt your word; but I cannot see my way."

"Ah, but you must try. You can help me—you will," she exclaimed, earnestly. "I care not what expenses are incurred; I will pay anything. Consider what is at stake. You will be sent for presently, and my sole hope is in you."

He considered for a few moments, and then answered, in a grave tone—

"It is running a great risk, and I hardly know what to say."

And he walked up and down the room in deep thought for a few moments. At length he halted opposite to her.

"Well," he said, "I have determined."

"And you will do what I ask?"

"Yes."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!"

"Stay! Let us clearly understand what you require of me. I am to certify to the cause of death, and order the coffin to be closed immediately after the—the body is placed in it. Is that all?"

"Yes; I will see to the rest, if I purchase the secrecy of the tradespeople with every penny I possess in the world. If I fail, I will come to you to help me."

"You may depend on my assistance," he answered, gravely, and Claudia rose to depart.

Dr. Bleckton accompanied her to the door, and saw her drive away, and then returned to his own room, where he dressed himself to be in readiness when the expected summons arrived.

It came almost before he was ready—a terrified messenger appeared at the door, desiring the doctor's immediate presence at Dutton House, for Lady Nortonshall had been found dead in her bed that morning.

"The story was true, then," he muttered to himself; "and this horrible thing has really happened. I don't half like the job: but I have promised, and I'll do what she asked me, let what will come of it. There can be no real harm if she has the power she professes to save this poor lady."

He started at once for Lord Nortonshall's house, and was shown immediately to the room in which Alma had drunk the cup prepared for her by the hands of him who had sworn to love and cherish her. It was with rather an unsteady voice and considerable nervousness of manner that Dr. Bleckton went through the necessary formalities, wrote the necessary certificate as to the cause of death of the inanimate figure which lay stretched on the bed, and recommended that the body should be placed in its coffin and closed up immediately.

His orders created considerable surprise and comment in the servants' hall; but Miss Langham felt considerably relieved that the examination had been so cursory, and told Dr. Bleckton that her master was

shut up in his own room, prostrated with grief, and would see no one.

The doctor paid no more heed to her excuses for the non-appearance of his lordship than was evinced by a contemptuous curl of his lip; but Langham, whose ears were very sharp, fancied she heard him say, between his closed teeth—

"Hypocrite!"

"Did you speak, sir?" she asked."

"No," he replied, shortly, and reiterated his instructions that the coffin should be closed immediately.

The housekeeper ventured to ask why this was necessary; but Dr. Blockton met her question with such a professional phalanx of hard words and surgical terms, that the good old lady was completely mystified, and thought he must be a very clever man indeed.

Poor Alma had not succeeded in gaining the affections of any of the servants in her London household. They were all strangers to her, and taking the one given them by their master, had treated her with disrespect, if not with positive rudeness; but her sudden death had touched their hearts, and many a whisper went about between them which would have made Lord Nortonshall's ears tingle could he have heard their purport.

He himself had declined to enter the room in which his wife lay, after the first hurried visit he had paid there on the first alarm being given. He had played his part very well indeed—the state of agitation he was in passed only too well for grief; but the servants had all been able to gratify their morbid curiosity by gazing on the face of their dead mistress, till the undertaker's men arrived, toward the evening, with the coffin and a shell.

It was quite dark by the time that they left, and they took the shell away with them, saying that it did not fit; but the coffin was left, screwed down as ordered. Nobody was in the room during the time they were doing their ghastly work, save an old woman who had been sent by Dr. Blockton to perform the necessary offices for the body, and Brown, who, for some reason best known to himself, seemed strangely anxious to see them safely out of the house.

Lord Nortonshall was not visible to any one; he shut himself up in his room, and gave orders that he was not to be disturbed on any pretence whatever, so no one, with the exception of Brown, who took him some refreshment, went near him. He showed himself at his door for half a minute once, as the men were conveying the shell out of the house; but seeing what they carried, he retreated with a low cry, and locked the door upon himself.

The men seemed to have much difficulty in carrying the shell, empty though it was; and when they had succeeded in reaching the street, Brown was obliged to give his assistance to deposit it in the vehicle, a covered van, which they had brought for the purpose.

"You know what you have to do?" he whispered, when all was made secure.

"Yes, yes—it's all right," answered one of the men, in the same tone, and with a warning glance Brown left them, and returned into the house.

When the door was fairly closed behind them the two men looked at one another with a sigh of relief, and the driver, taking the reins from the boy who had been holding the horse, mounted the box, and drove away.

"Phew! We're safe out, thank goodness!" he exclaimed, turning to his companion.

"Yes—a rum start, though, ain't it?"

"Rather! The rummest go as ever I was concerned in. But it's the word when you're well paid for it. What's the next move on the board?"

"Get out of this as fast as you can drive," was the reply.

And away they drove, not to the undertaker's shop, though they started in that direction; but presently, hurrying up a side street, they went rapidly off in quite another road.

Claudia did not drive straight home after leaving the doctor's in the morning. She had still some work to do, and ordered the cabman to take her to Messrs. Wishaw's, the upholsterer's, where she had a long conference with one of the principals, and a shorter one with two rough-looking workmen he sent for from the workshop to speak with her. There were many demurs made, but the sound of her pleading voice, and the sight of certain crisp pieces of paper, overcame all scruples, and Claudia left the place utterly exhausted, but satisfied that she had done all that lay in her power to frustrate her persecutor.

Dorothy uttered an exclamation of terror as she helped her young mistress out of the cab, and implored her vehemently to go to bed at once; but Claudia would not hear of it. There was still work remained for her to do, she said. But Nature would not bear any more, and when she reached her room, it was only to fall into a state of insensibility, from which, however, she soon recovered; but Dorothy had taken advantage of the opportunity, and undressed her, and when she came to herself again she was in bed.

"Shall I send for the doctor?" pleaded the good old woman.

"No, no, not yet; he will be here in the morning. I only want rest now. You can do all that is necessary for me."

"As well as you could yourself," answered the old woman, with a meaning look.

She was quite aware of what Claudia had been doing, and what remained yet to be done, and the poor girl, satisfied on that score, lay quiet, with her strength all gone, unable to think even on her future plans.

There was no concealing the fact any longer, Claudia was dangerously ill, and her attendant watched by her in consternation; but she resolved not to disturb her from the deep slumber of exhaustion into which she had at last fallen, let what would happen.

It was about eleven o'clock that night, and Claudia was still sleeping, when the faithful Dorothy heard the sound of wheels stopping at the back door, and after seeing that her charge still slumbered, she went down-stairs.

Meanwhile the housemaid had opened the door, and stood parleying with a man. The night was very dark, and she could not see what was without; but told him, in answer to his questioning, that he could not see her mistress.

"But she expects me," he persisted.

"I don't care, she's ill in bed, and I won't disturb her."

The man gave a low whistle.

"That's awkward," he muttered. "The lady said I was to ask for her, and no one else."

He went to the road and consulted with another man, who stood leaning against the cart.

"I say, what's to be done now?" he said. "Here's mademoiselle ill in bed, and left no orders about—"

"My stars!" ejaculated the other. "No orders?"

But they were spared any further thought upon the subject by the appearance of Dorothy, who, with a few whispered words, speedily convinced them that they might safely obey her directions, and the two men, carrying something between them with the greatest difficulty, entered the passage.

The girl started back with affright.

"Why, it's a coffin!" she almost screamed.

"Hush!" said Dorothy, and led the way into an inner room, where a bright fire was burning.

CHAPTER LIV.

"EYE FOR EYE."

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard.
—Shakespeare.

Frank Vavasour sat gazing blankly at the morning paper on the day following the events recorded in the two preceding chapters. How long he had lived since reading the paragraph which had fallen with such a crushing weight upon his head he knew not, all feeling, all sensation, seemed to have gone from out his being, and left him oblivious to all outward impressions.

Cold and formal as all such announcements are, the notice which had burned its few brief words into his brain, appeared in the obituary column of the Times:

"On the 4th inst., suddenly, of disease of the heart, Alma, Lady Nortonshall, aged 22."

"Dead!" he murmured to himself. "Dead! my darling dead, and I not there to see her, to receive her last breath!"

He could not comprehend it yet. He was stunned, bewildered by the blow.

He could not believe it real; he had seen her only two short days before, and she was well. But here was the notice staring him in the face. Oh, it must be some horrible mistake, he thought, some blunder, that would be easily explained!

How long he would have sat there, taking no heed of time, and seemingly bound by a spell to the chair in which he sat, it is impossible to say; but he was roused at length by the entrance of Austin Bertram, who, receiving no answer to the knock which he gave at Frank's door, came in, with another newspaper in his hand.

"Vavasour," he said, but the young man made no answer; and Bertram, walking up to him, touched his arm.

Frank looked up, but did not betray any recognition of his visitor, who glanced at the paper which lay upon his knees.

"Ah! you have seen it, I see," said Bertram, in a sympathizing tone.

"Seen! seen what?" responded Frank.

"Poor Lady Nortonshall's death. Ah! I little thought I should never see her again. It was very sudden."

With a bound Frank leaped from his chair, and stood erect.

"Sudden!" he exclaimed. "Then it is true?"

"True, my dear boy! Of course it's true," answered the other, in a surprised tone. "Why, the news is all over town."

"Merciful heaven!" ejaculated Frank, and then he broke down, and, sinking back into his seat, shed a flood of brain and heart-relieving tears, while Austin Bertram stood looking at him with an ill-concealed sneer upon his lips.

"Come! come!" he said, at length, assuming a soothing tone, which, however, grated upon his listener's ears with a false ring. "You must not give way in this manner. I had no idea that it would have touched you so nearly."

"Hadn't you?" said Frank, scornfully, though his features worked convulsively the while. "Hadn't you? No, I don't suppose you can fathom the depths of a grief like mine. And yet you ought to know how nearly this news would affect me. You know she was my world, Bertram, dearer to me than all my hopes of Heaven. Not think that it would touch me! Oh, Alma, my darling, my lost love! But I'll not believe it even now," he continued, fiercely, starting from his chair. "It's a lie, a miserable mistake; she is not dead."

"I'm afraid you'll find there's very little mistake in it," returned Bertram. "I called here yesterday, when I heard all about it, but you were out, and I didn't think it worth while to spoil your night's rest when you came in. I could see that you had heard nothing about it."

"No, it came upon me like a thunderclap this morning. I went to Bayswater last night."

"What! to Claudia's?"

"Yes, and she is very ill—seriously, I think."

"'When sorrows come, they come not in single spies, but in battalions,'" quoted Bertram. "Is it dangerous, do you think?"

"I fear so; poor Claudia. She is not able to see or speak to any one, and her old nurse seemed strangely agitated and flurried. She would hardly stay to speak with me."

"I've noticed that Claudia has not been looking at all like her old self since her strange intimacy with Nortonshall. There is more in her illness than appears above the surface, I expect."

"Curse him!" ejaculated Frank.

"Who? Nortonshall! Oh, with all my heart! We're what the world calls friends in a general way; but I must confess I've no great admiration for his lordship."

"He's a villain—a double-dyed, designing scoundrel. Claudia was right in her suspicions after all."

"Suspicions!"

"Yes. Listen to me, Bertram. It is no natural death that poor girl, my only love this side of the grave, has died."

"Whatever do you mean?"

"I mean that he has murdered her."

"Preposterous! My dear Frank, your grief has turned your brain. It's lucky that no one besides myself hears you say such a thing. Murder is a ticklish word to use in connection with any man's name. Besides, what earthly reason could he have for such a thing?"

"Reason enough; he wanted to be rid of her. Ah, Claudia, your dread was not without foundation! Heart disease! No, no; I am not to be juggled by so transparent a device. She has been poisoned with some drug which leaves no trace behind to tell of its deadly work."

"Pshaw! you are certainly raving, my dear Frank. People don't poison in secret now, as they did in the good old times, when to smell a rose, or shake hands with a friend, might simply be a passport to the other world. Try and calm yourself, man; and don't promulgate your private opinions too much, or you will be raising a storm you'll find it difficult to quell."

He glanced keenly at Frank as he spoke, but the young man did not observe him. He had seated himself again, and was once more reading over the words which had come to him with such terrible force.

"Leave me now, Bertram," he said, "for awhile, at least, and let me think the matter over. I see the letters, but I cannot believe the words they form. I feel as though I were in some sort the cause of it all."

"Yes," chuckled Bertram, when he had gone out, and closed the door behind him; "yes, you are partly the cause of it, my young friend; but I suspect a new love has the greater share in it. So you've done it at last, my Lord Nortonshall," he mused, as he went up the stairs; "and cleverly managed too. But I have you under my thumb, safe as you fancy yourself. I think I could tell them how my lady came by her heart disease, and I may venture to use my knowledge if occasion offers. Jasper Glosson has been dead too many years to do me any harm, and I fear no other man."

And so, with malice at his heart, Austin Bertram went forth, but whatever plans he had relating to Lord Nortonshall were doomed to be frustrated. A more powerful enemy than he was on his lordship's track, and would leave all competitors behind in the race for vengeance.

Later in the day Frank Vavasour sallied forth with his heavy load of sorrow and anxiety to wander past the house which, he believed, contained the mortal remains of her whom he had loved so passionately.

It was dusk when he reached the house, and he stood on the opposite pavement, gazing at its closed windows and drawn blinds, which revealed nothing to him save the confirmation of the fact that death had set his seal within.

He longed, oh! how he longed to make his way into the house, to look once more, if only for a moment, upon that dear face; but he dared make no attempt to satisfy this wish for Alma's sake. Her memory must not be tainted by his selfish wishes, and he was forced to be content with what poor comfort he could glean from the sight of the house which held her senseless clay.

Suddenly he saw a carriage drive furiously up, and the occupant got hurriedly out, and entered the house. The servant who answered the door was very pale, and in the visitor, who was admitted at once, Frank recognized an eminent physician, who looked very grave, and shook his head as the servant spoke a few hurried words to him in passing.

"What can it be?" thought Frank, and for an instant his heart stood still, and then went on again with a sudden bound, with the insane hope that the physician had been called for Alma, that the report of her death had been a blunder; but the next moment showed him that such a thought was futile. The faces he had seen would have shown signs of gladness under such circumstances, not have been cast down with gloom. He felt half-inclined to knock at the door and inquire; but he knew that Lord Nortonshall's domestics would not have given him any reply, and he turned despairingly away from the street.

Then he thought with self-reproach that in his sorrow he had forgotten Claudia, and calling a cab, he drove to Bayswater, full of anxiety regarding her.

The door was opened by Dorothy in person. She had seen the cab drive up, and Frank's pale face at the window, and came down—fearful that the girl might admit him—to prevent his entrance to the house.

"You can't see her to-night, Mr. Vavasour," she said. "I dare not let any one in."

"Not me?"

"Not even you, sir."

"By whose orders?" he asked, rather angrily.

"Dr. Blockton's, in the first place."

"Pshaw! She will see me."

"No, sir; her own directions were as strict. She is very ill, Mr. Vavasour; the least of any excitement—"

"Well, well, I will not insist," he said; "but let me in for a moment to speak to yourself, Dorothy. I can't stand here. I am very ill myself, I think."

Dorothy pushed open the dining-room door, and motioned him in, though there was a strange air of constraint and stiffness about her which puzzled him completely. He felt very faint and giddy, and was glad to sit down on the nearest chair; but she remained standing at a little distance from him.

"You want to see me go, I perceive, Dorothy," he said, somewhat bitterly. "Have I worn out my welcome here, or has some strange revolution happened in the world of friendship? Am I to look upon your reception of me as a reflex of your mistress's humor?"

"Oh, no, sir; no, Mr. Frank," the old woman replied, in a pained voice. "You are as welcome as you ever were; but there are reasons. Mademoiselle would tell you herself, but she has forbidden me to speak. She gave me a message for you."

"A message?"

"Yes. She told me to say to you that you must trust her, and all would come right in the end."

"What can she mean?"

"I don't know, sir—at least, don't ask me. Oh, sir, I was to ask you if you know Mrs. Eversfield's address?"

"Mrs. Eversfield!" he repeated, in surprise. "No, I know nothing further of her than that she is somewhere abroad."

He paused, but Dorothy did not speak again. She evidently was on thorns while he remained; but presently he resumed—

"Of course," he said, "your mistress knows—has heard—that is—of—of—"

"Lady Nortonshall's death! Oh, yes," answered Dorothy, in the same uncomfortable manner. "We have known of it ever since it happened."

"She was much shocked, of course."

"Very much, sir."

Frank sighed. There was evidently nothing to be gathered from Dorothy, and he rose to depart, telling the old woman he would return in the morning.

Then he went away, and Dorothy returned up-stairs.

"I've offended him," she said, as she heard the cab rattle off. "But I couldn't help it. I only obeyed orders."

She had not been long seated by the side of Claudia's bed when she was summoned down-stairs again.

"Is your mistress awake?" asked Dr. Blockton, for he was the fresh visitor.

"She was dozing when I came down, sir."

"Ah! I must see her at once;" and he spoke a few words to her in a low tone, which caused the old woman to start back in surprise.

"Do you think it will be safe to tell her?" she asked.

"I shall see. Let us go up."

Claudia was awake. She was looking better and brighter for her sleep, and looked curiously at Dr. Blockton.

"What has happened now?" she said. "I see something in your face."

He hesitated.

"Tell me," she continued. "I can bear anything rather than suspense."

"Lord Nortonshall—"

"I see—I know!" she exclaimed, eagerly. "He has fallen into his own net!"

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

☞ A Montana man has been exiled from the Territory under pain of pitch and plumage, for the crime of marrying a China-woman.

MAGEE vs. MAGEE.

BY MILES CHRISTIAN.

One summer afternoon, when the sky was blue and the woods were green, Will and Sallie went blackberrying. The sun was scorching; the clover-blossoms hung heavy and wilted on their half-baked stems, and the butteroups, nearly melted, were covered almost past recognition with dust, that there was not the ghost of a wind to raise; the birds flew about silently, and the chickens panted gaspingly in the holes they had scratched under the currant bushes; there was not even a dot of ominous cloud on the horizon. It was hot; a royal July day. Why on such a day Will Daton and Sallie Magee should go out into the open fields to pick blackberries, is up to the present date an unfathomable mystery. Ever since I have been a firm believer in fate—certainly, oh, yes! I have quite forgotten to tell you that they did not go together.

Will took his tin-pail and hat and started alone. Sallie took her tin-pail and hat, plus an umbrella and a pair of gloves, and started alone.

"I shouldn't wonder if I should have a sun stroke," remarked Sallie to the tin-pail. The tin-pail said nothing, probably either because it thought the sentence was not finished and did not like to interrupt a lady, or because it had nothing to say. "The doctor said sun was wholesome, though—mercy it's hot." Here the tin-pail would most probably have replied, but two large drops of perspiration rolled off Sallie's chin and struck its bright side with a startling plash, awing it into frightened silence. Sallie gasped and walked bravely on. Here is a good place, so I will stop to explain that Sallie Magee, 17— Walnut street, Philadelphia, from frequent chocolate caramels, parties and corsets had become so—don't be shocked—"shackling," that Dr. Sensible had sent her, denuded of the corsets and some other feminine devices of torture, to an old-fashioned farm-house to recuperate. His principal injunction had been sun. So between sun-baths, frequent walks, and entire absence of veils, Sallie Magee, golden-haired blonde, had become Sallie Magee, golden-haired brunette, with half a dozen freckles thrown into the bargain. But what are a few freckles and a tanned face in the balance with a straight, lithe figure, perfect health and matchless spirits? Sallie was well satisfied, and bright enough to know that her sacrifice of a gay summer would only make her winter campaign the more brilliant.

Will Daton, from reasons arising out of the meagre salary of a second-rate lawyer's secretary, had settled himself and books down at an old farm-house to idle away his holiday. Which being but two weeks, was not very culpable laziness considering the fact that he worked like a good fellow the other fifty.

As I think by this time you must entertain fears of Sallie having melted, I'll just take you right over to Mr. Harding's pasture-field. Why Mr. Harding reserved that field for the sustenance of his "flocks and herds," is another mystery. It never at any time had any water, or the least atom of shade if the sun was shining, for there was not a tree within three hundred yards of any part of its boundary; and it was so much of a hill, that what water reached it from the clouds immediately flowed beyond its fences to seek its level.

It was to this field that Sallie and Will went for blackberries. Why they both [illegible] decree of Providence unfathomed to this day; for, though there were quite a good many vines, any rational human being could see at a glance, that no fruit could possibly mature in such a place with the cattle, that were now standing listlessly about panting, racing daily over it.

Sallie crept painfully under the bars on one side, just as Will leaped lightly over the fence on the other. She had lowered her umbrella when he first saw her, to get under the bars, and had nothing on her head more protecting than a small, fashionable hat.

"Heavens," he exclaimed, as he wiped his dripping face with his drenched handkerchief. "That woman's a salamander."

Which was followed, as the pretty little green, dusty umbrella went up, by—

"What a good idea. What a stupid idiot I was not to bring mine."

They both picked their way daintily about among the vines and over the stones, till an accident happened. Sallie put her pretty little shoe down, and up sprang an angry little snake and wound itself, in less time than it takes to breathe, round her prettily little ankle.

The natural consequence of this was a scream; instantly followed by a series of others, in rapid succession; and when Will arrived, he found the little lady white with terror, holding up her skirts without ceremony, and screaming as only a pair of uncorseted lungs can. In half a minute the dragon was slain, the screams hushed, and St. George, holding his helmet in his hand, begged to know of the princess if it had bitten her.

"No, it was only a fright."

Would she not like a drink? She glanced from the dusty vines and dead snake to his dripping face, and laughed. He seeing the joke, laughingly explained that the liquid was to be obtained from Mr. Harding's well.

The bars were lowered by the perspiring hero, the green umbrella sailed gayly over, the house-dog was subdued, the drink taken under the maple trees out of the leaky bucket, and—well, there were the two empty pails and the afternoon just begun. So these two audacious young people, not even knowing each other's names, actually agreed, one proposing and the other accepting, to go blackberrying together.

They went over by Mr. Baylie's and the "Pine Headrow;" they stayed till the shadows began to lengthen, lengthened, disappeared and the stars began to look around; yet, would you believe it, they brought home not a blackberry.

It is strange how rapidly people become acquainted when they are isolated from society. When Sallie and Will parted at her gate, he handed her the empty pail, pressed her soft little hand and said, "Good-night, Miss Sallie," in a tone she would have resented as an insult, upon such short acquaintance, on her father's Axminster. Here, on the soft grass, she smiled and echoed the "good-night," half tenderly.

Will walked slowly home through the pasture-field, by the winding path, wondering, in a vague, negative sort of way, where the multitude of blue eyes came from, that stared at him from every clover-blossom and larkspur.

Sallie stood leaning on the rough, old gate, actively wondering why this conquest gave her a different kind of pleasure from any former one. He had begged leave to call, and disgraceful to relate, she had readily consented.

He came the next morning, and as a sequel to the last night's tête-à-tête brought "Faust." We all know that a musty little parlor is not the place to sympathize with Marguerite. But, there was the grand old orchard with its fragrant carpet of white clover and canopy of rustling leaves, and green apples; and there, leaning against an aged tree, with Will crushing the blossoms at her feet, Sallie sat morning after morning, sometimes netting, sometimes idle, and listened, in turn, to Faust, Lalla Rookh, Childe Harold, Lady of the Lake and then Faust again. Of course she had read most of them before; but how differently they sounded from passionate young lips. And between the morning readings and the afternoon walks, by the time they got to "Faust" again their case was hopeless. Will had not said, "Sallie, I love you." But the dullest intellect could not help seeing, at a glance, that such was the state of affairs, and Sallie was by no means dull.

But this very brightness only enabled her to see the more closely the mesalliance between a poor secretary and a Walnut street belle.

"No," said the portion of her heart inherited from John Magee, broker, "emphatically you're a fool; how would you look, you little goose, washing dishes and sweeping the pavement? Pleasant, will it not be, to haggle with the butcher over a pound of meat? and—"

"Oh," piped up the part indebted for its being to Mary Magee, nee Clark, "you heartless little wretch, as if—"

"It was pleasant to dress poultry," put in the paternal inheritance, prompted, no doubt, by the evil one.

Might makes right. Sallie shuddered at this, and stopped thinking about it. Meanwhile the two weeks were nearly gone.

Reading Goethe and Byron under shady trees to a beautiful girl whom he loves, is very fascinating to manhood at three and twenty, but bread and butter and a coat that is not threadbare, are more so, say what you will. And Will grudged every moment that lessened his time with Sallie.

But the more he fretted and fumed the less good it did. And the more he tried to tell Sallie he loved her the harder it became; till at last the day and hour for his departure had arrived, and not a word had he spoken.

The hour had come when he was to leave her, possibly never to meet her again, or least until she was the wife of another.

If Will had been given to such absurdities, he would have gone mad at his stupidity in wasting all the golden hours of shade and sunshine, of silence and solitude.

Fifty, a hundred times, he could have told her the words that were so anxious, yet so reluctant, to be heard. And now the train was in sight. Sallie stood (she had so far demeaned herself as to walk two miles through the broiling sun to see him off) beside him, bravely choking back her tears and smothering her heartache.

The locomotive thundered past the station, on rumbled the cars, the train stopped. She held out her hand and lowered her lids, that he might not see the sorrow she knew was in her eyes.

There stood the train trembling to be off. It was a small station, and they both knew the cars stayed but a minute. One little moment! Will grasped the soft, gloved hand as if he was drowning; he got very white. Half the moment was gone, wasted, he bitterly thought, like the rest; but half of it remained yet, for aught he knew more, or may be ten, it mattered little. He leaned over her:

"Sallie, will you marry me?"

"Oh! don't."

"Toot!" shrieked the engine. The train gave a thrilling jar.

"Yes, Will."

His arm went around her, and he took his first kiss—the kiss that poets rave over, young girls dream of, and novelists make a study of. The kiss that belonged to the dreamy hours with Faust and the long twilight walks. Took it for just a second, if he could have looked at his watch, and leaving her first blushes to cool on the platform of a depot, ran after and sprang on the retreating train.

Sallie walked back home through the dusty roads. Dusty roads! They might have been marble-halls, with plashing fountains, for aught she cared. July ripened into August. August was on the wane, when Sallie left Hillside Farm and crept surreptitiously back behind the closed blinds and doors of the Walnut street mansion. Here September sped away without a warning. Love-making on a silken sofa is no less agreeable than on daisies. But with October, home trooped father, mother, brothers, sisters. Will stayed away. Sallie grieved for the past tête à-têtes over the little round table, with her mother's Sevres china-cups, demeaned to hold tea for a secretary. Winter, however, suddenly stepped in, and Sallie half forgot her heartache in her whirl of fashionable gayety; but poor Will! all through the long winter he worked alone, with only scraps of notes to comfort him, and which he wore next his heart and read hourly after the style of young fools in general, and lived over again in his lonely room the bliss of those stolen September visits in the shaded parlors and Sallie's bright little bower, where they drank tea and kissed each other.

Soft May airs were blowing, when one day the door of Will's office opened and—could he credit his senses, in walked Sallie.

"Why, Sallie!" gasped Will.

"Yes," replied Sallie, smoothing her ruffled plumage after her warm reception.

"Will, I want you to marry me now, right away."

There, that is all I shall tell you, except that John Magee, of Walnut street, aided and abetted by Mary, his wife, cut and otherwise maltreated Sallie Daton, nee Magee, of Brandywine, in the most shameful manner; and that the said Sallie Magee Daton turns her dresses, cooks her own and her husband's dinner; for aught I know washes his shirts, is sole nurse for three of the prettiest children I ever saw, and says she wishes she had every one of the years she wasted in fashionable life to spend here. Omnia vincit amor.

☞ An employee in a planing mill at Rock Island, Illinois, was explaining to a visitor the way in which his son had an arm taken off in a planing machine last summer, when his own arm was caught and taken off in the same manner.

☞ Gum Bay recently discovered that it contained eleven widows and exactly the same number of widowers, and feeling that the welfare of the city was at stake, a committee was entrusted with the task of pairing them off, which it did by means of drawing lots. The widows, however, were allowed the privilege of changing off on even terms, if they did not like their allotments.

☞ A Connecticut man, while eating fish, got a bone in his throat, which irritated and pained him excessively. For forty-eight hours he fasted, in the hope that the bone would leave the throat, but it did not. A friend suggested that he should swallow an egg. He tried the experiment, and felt the bone move; he then swallowed another egg, and it was gone entirely. This may be worth remembering.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

NANON. A Novel. By RHODA BROUGHTON. Author of "Good-Bye, Sweetheart," "Red as a Rose is She," etc. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

MONEY MAKER; OR, THE VICTORY OF THE BASILISK. By OLIVER OPTIC. With thirteen illustrations. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By JOSEPH LE CONTE. Published by D. Appleton & Co.; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

THE PROSTRATE STATE. By JAMES S. PIKE, late Minister of the United States at the Hague. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

WHAT SHALL WE DO TO-NIGHT? OR SOCIAL AMUSEMENTS FOR EVENING PARTIES. By LAURA D. MAYNE. Published by Dick & Fitzgerald. New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haff-lfinger, Phila.

THE BRIDE'S COMIC DIALOGUES FOR SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS; ROW'S NATIONAL WAGON TABLES; ROW'S COMPLETE FRACTIONAL READY RECKONER. Three small volumes published by Dick & Fitzgerald, New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Philada.

THE TWO ADMIRALS. A Tale. By J. FENIMORE COOPER. Illustrated from Drawings by F. O. C. DARLEY. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

THE LIBERAL EDUCATION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By Prof. WILLIAM P. ATKINSON, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A Pamphlet. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

GEO. M. BAKER'S TEMPERANCE DRAMAS. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston; and also for sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, Phila.

☞ A woman confined in a New England lunatic asylum managed to obtain a razor, and, pushing out her tongue as far as possible, cut it off even with her teeth. As this did not produce death she jumped out of the second-story window, but was picked up with no bones broken. She was then taken to a hospital, where she will not annoy her nurses by talking.

☞ Lightoff is the name of an Italian tenor who is coming here to out-sing all singers, and the Detroit Free Press says that if he goes to charging $4 per head he might as well change his name to Light-out.

Unhealthy Surroundings.—To breathe pure, healthful air, and to follow occupations conducive to health and long life are the privileges of the minority. The majority must dwell wherever their lot is cast, however insalubrious the locality may be, and work at the craft assigned to them however destructive to health and vigor. Medical science has, however, come to the aid of the latter. In HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS, they have (and have had for the last twenty-five years) the best defence against the morbid influences which create and foster disease, that the vegetable kingdom can supply. Its ingredients are among the finest botanic specifics which research has yet revealed to man. As a preventive of, and remedy for the disease generated by swamps, miasma, the foul air of factories, excessive heat, over exertion of body or mind, unwholesome water, or any other morbific cause, Hostetter's Stomach Bitters bear away the palm from all medicines of the present day.

MANHATTAN, Kan., April 8, 1873.

R. V. PIERCE, Buffalo, N. Y.:

Dear Sir—Your Favorite Prescription has done my wife a world of good. She has taken nearly two bottles and has felt better the past two weeks than at any time in the past two years. No more periodical pains; none of that aching back or dragging sensation in her stomach she has been accustomed to for several years. I have so much confidence in it that I would be perfectly willing to warrant to certain customers of ours who would be glad to get hold of relief at any expense. I have tried many Patent Medicines, but never had any occasion to extol one before.

Very truly yours,
GEO. B. WHITING.

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THE
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JAN. 17, 1874.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

THIS WEEK

We begin the fascinating

ROMANCE OF ENGLISH LIFE,

entitled

THE GHOST

OF

NORMAN PARK;

OR,

Two Women Wronged.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD.

TO BE SOON COMMENCED!

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

On the Brink of a Precipice.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

THE NEW YEAR.

Things always take a start with the new year; plans of business or plans of pleasure, worldly advancement or spiritual progress, whatever rules life, feels the new stimulus to hope and to work. The mad race for wealth has been checked in many ways, for the general good. That the inordinately rich become poor, is not the worst feature of the panic, though the most prominent. These downward turns of fortune's wheel give worldliness a wholesome shock, lead people to ask themselves what they are living for, and by the difficulty of getting money suggest the real need of it. The newly rich seldom spend wisely. The usual thing for the millionaire stock-gambler is to flare like a swift-risen rocket before the eyes of men, gorgeous in upholstery, lavish in expenditure as the hero of a fairy tale, which indeed he feels himself to be; and all this helps the downfall to be as sudden as the going up. One day in king's houses, the next uncertain of the wherewithal to live. The times furnish many instances. Of one of these New York speculators the papers tell us that "a mortgage of four hundred thousand dollars on his palatial mansion swept it away." And all the splendid furniture was exposed for sale,—marvels of rosewood and damask and velvet, gilding and carving, plate-glass mirrors, and curtains a thousand dollars a window, others of black lace, richly embroidered in colors; the details are tiresome as the reality would be, because such furnishing is not graceful with thought and feeling, artistic taste and home affection, but "stiff with lavish costliness,"—only shop-show, after all.

And there was hardly time in this case for the glitter of the shop to be softened off by daily uses. Two or three years on "silken-canopied beds, quilts of eider-down, lavender satin sofas, and Axminster carpets," and the whole passed away like a dream. There would not be so much harm in this sumptuousness if it were not overvalued, and really precious things bartered off for it.

This is to be poverty-stricken, indeed, and their best chance for true riches is when adversity mercifully sweeps away the delusions that blind them. Happy for them if they could join the class people call poor because their utmost exertions bring so small a portion of worldly good, yet who never can be brought to "accept the situation." A sprightly writer sketches them to the life. "They were always outwitting stepmother Fate. However she snubbed and twitched, and set them in corners, they were ready for her. Take away carpets, and they stained their floors walnut-brown. Deny them bureaus, and they transformed a packing-box, a dollar looking-glass, two cigar-boxes and some old chintz, into a dressing-table. Send them away hungry from the greasy table of their lodging-house, and they smuggle slices of bread, buy three cents' worth of butter, make toast over their wretched little fire, and turn the whole into a revel, which they talk of with glee. They will *not* accept the situation, and consider themselves disinherited. They have every new painting and engraving by heart. They visit the art sales. They know just where they would place the rugs of Shiraz, and the prints of Hogarth. They will not see that they have no finger in such pies. They are continually trying to put by money for artistic treasures, when the ends of their income will not meet."

In such a school the true uses of money are well learned. It is the school of "hard times," now teaching so many new pupils its wholesome lessons. One that American society needs is the small cost of really pleasant and profitable social intercourse. The year that has just begun, will be apt to show an improvement in simplicity. People will receive their friends more informally, and as a result more frequently, and sociability come into fashion again. The expense and trouble of an elaborate evening entertainment would be dreaded even if the thing were satisfactory. When it is not, but empty and tiresome in proportion to its pretensions, and all the better sort of people find it a bore, other ways of being sociable come into favor. Thus, the afternoon receptions, common enough abroad, and growing in popularity here of late years, will be found just the thing for families reduced in means who cannot give much time or money to society, but *can* give what society needs more than anything else, a high tone and purpose. Foreigners used to say there was no society in America, only companies of boys and girls assembled to dance and eat. There was too much truth in it then; but now, while the same dancing-parties still prevail for young people whom they suit, a better kind are in vogue for those who object to late hours and brainless talk, and find just the refreshment they need from their life-work, whatever it may be, in an afternoon hour or two spent with congenial spirits, literary, scientific or artistic, the slight collation not obtruded in any way, but always ready, and partaken or not at option. The "five-o'clock teas" delighted in by the elite of Paris and London, and of our own large cities, are, after all, only a revival of the old custom common to all country neighborhoods.

Plans for spiritual progress are now made with the new year. Ruskin says:—

"I pray you with all earnestness to prove and know within your hearts, that all things lovely and righteous are possible for those who believe in their possibility, and who determine that, for their part, they will make every day's work contribute to them. Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as a close; then let every one of these short lives leave its sure record of some kindly thing done for others—some goodly strength, or knowledge gained by yourselves."

And as to the progress of the race, I will quote from one of the finest minds in the Church of England some comforting words, for those who deny that there has been any, that Christianity has really accomplished anything in these eighteen hundred years. The comfort is in accepting the slowness of the process as necessary:

"Some ask, why God did not get rid of these evils by an exercise of omnipotence at once, and then get rid of an evil, and that is by exhausting it. We cannot get the answer to our question, 'What is right?' till we have held fast and battled with the Protean of evil through every alteration of his form. We must work through all possible errors before we find the perfect good. But we should exhaust them much sooner if we held fast to the primary ideas which Christ gave to men. Their ruin is logically contained in the doctrines of the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. In proclaiming these their doom was sealed, but not accomplished. Their final overthrow was left to the slow work of man, century after century; and one of the things we have to look forward to with joy and triumph in the coming year, is new blows dealt upon them. When men begin to understand that progress is the work of Christ's thought, they will turn to Him not only as Master of souls, but as King of nations." S. P.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

WOMEN AND WOMEN.

There have been some noble women in the world, from time to time. It does a woman's heart good to return sometimes to the old books, and read of women who have lived in the centuries of history. There is no brighter name on the storied page than the name of Castilian Isabella, beautiful, gifted, and good. Her grateful subjects named her "Isabella of peace and goodness." She established the first printing press ever set up in Spain, among her other beneficent enterprises. Her life was a constant study to promote the highest welfare of her subjects. She is one of the good, brave ladies of history whom it does a woman's heart good to turn back and read about.

Another is the great "empress-queen," Maria Theresa, empress of Austria and queen of Hungary, noble, brave and strong, called by her subjects "Mother." There never was another ruler of Austria so beloved, so revered as she. She too strove by every means in her power to make her nation a great and prosperous people. On her death-bed, in the midst of pain, when her attendants sought to give her an opiate, that she might lose the sense of suffering in sleep, she refused to consent to it. "I wish to meet my death awake," said the fearless, lofty-spirited empress-queen.

Sometimes a tremendous despair comes over me. It overwhelms me like a London fog, and I find not a chink or crack of sunshine, for a little while. It is when I read of the good women of history, and compare them with the average woman of our time. The wicked women of history have plenty of matches in our time, woman for woman, just as vicious and evil as any of the women of old, but of the good, grand, brave, and even the learned women of history, I find no types in these days. There is one very scholarly, learned woman now in the world. That woman is George Eliot, the English woman. But I don't know any others. Queen Victoria, who has such infinite opportunity of doing good to her age and race and of writing her name indelibly on the page of history as one who loved her fellow-man, is— What is Queen Victoria? A stupid, stingy Dutch woman. That is all. We American women, who have so many advantages over most other women in the world, cannot show a single great novelist, great poetess, or great scholar. We have a few clever, sprightly letter-writers, nothing more. And among all the women with whom I've ever been acquainted in my life, I never met but just one who would come anywhere near being a Queen Isabella or a Maria Theresa, if she had opportunity. There is no call for this dear good body to be a Zenobia, or a Maria Theresa, but she is just great-souled and warm-hearted and intelligent enough to be either, if anybody wanted her to be.

It is the average woman who fills one with despair. In this day, when there is so much to be won and learned, so much that is good and great to be done, when the heart of the whole world is throbbing with the intensity of hope for the future,—in these days the average woman is a ninny and thinks about her clothes.

The whole generation of average women was exhibited in the small, the other day. Where it was I won't tell you, and it's of no consequence anyhow, but it was in a place where there were a number of ladies and a few men. The ladies were all of the class of the ordinary "nice woman" of society, considered intelligent, and all that sort of thing. In one corner a woman of thirty, who ought to have had her ears boxed for being a simpleton, smirked and puckered her mouth at a red-nosed widower. One of the most despicable things in this world is affectation. It is right to improve on our natural manner, but to assume a manner which isn't our own, fills the looker-on with infinite disgust. This woman wore above her ears some little fuzzy ringlets, which looked like a pig's tail in curl papers. She drew the corners of her mouth together, and prinked it up to make it look small. She kept gnawing her lips to make them look red, and kept winking her eyes and screwing them up to make them look bright, at the same time that she squinted 'em up sideways ever and anon at the red-nosed widower, and tried to fascinate him with her winning ways. An idiot could see through her intentions with regard to that red-nosed widower,—an idiot couldn't have helped saying in his mind: "Oh! you egregious fool! You—you contemptible critter! Your own mother wouldn't own you if she saw you at your monkeyish didoes."

(Mind I don't say it was any harm for the woman to try to fascinate the red-nosed widower if she wanted to. Such things are matters of taste, and that was all well enough. But it was the woman's affectation and idiotic talk which sort of disgusted a plain body's soul, and made him sick of seeing women around.)

In another corner sat two sisters talking. One lived in a country village, the other lived in the city. A railroad was about to be put through the country village, connecting it with the city where the second sister lived. The country sister and the city sister were talking of the new railroad. Did they mention the advantages the railroad would give the country, how the country people would then be in reach of ever so many useful and entertaining things of which they were deprived before, and how the city people also would be that much nearer to the pure air and the country which God made? Did they even speak of the vulgar consideration which at once occurs to all us American snobs when a railroad is constructed through a country village,—did they even speak of how the railroad would increase the value of property by thus bringing together two distant parts of the Union? Did they? No, they didn't. But the sister who lived in the city, a dumpy lummax, with a stupid, heavy face, which had about as much life or expression to it as if it had been cut out of the side of a kitchen door, said to the sister who lived in the country village:

"When the railroad goes through Greentown, I'll come up once in a while and *set the fashions.*"

The idea!

That woman was a dumpy, heavy-faced married woman of middle age, and had little children to take care of and rear, and yet the vapid idiot thought of nothing but coming with the new railroad, than going to that country town and displaying her clothes. She called herself a woman decidedly above the average in intelligence, too. I don't know how it may strike you, but it occurs to me that the good, old-fashioned, plain quiet countrywomen who tend their babies and knit their husbands' stockings, and don't know who's President this day, are infinitely superior intellectually to that intelligent woman who flattered herself in her silly heart that she was going to impress people by means of her clothes. In this day of wide work and high privileges for women, all this dumpy creature thought about was clothes. Pretty animal she'd be to set herself up as the equal of an intelligent man, wouldn't she?

What makes one so immeasurably discouraged, is, that there are so many thousand dunces just like her. It is right to follow fashions when they are not absurd, and all women ought to enjoy pretty clothes when they can get them—but to make clothes the end and aim of life, to fritter their existence away over clothes, to make clothes the burden of their earthly song, in the race of life to pursue only clothes, clothes, forever clothes, to talk clothes, think clothes, and dream clothes, is a very contemptible use to make of the noble mortal intellect. Yet so far as I can judge, the average woman's clothes occupy at least ninety-nine hundredths of all her waking thoughts, and the same proportion of her sleeping ones. And I leave it to you whether, after reading of Isabella, Maria Theresa, Zenobia, and all those fine ancients, it isn't rather discouraging to come down to the hard pan of modern times, and find the average woman with no loftier ambition than fascinating red-nosed widowers and getting new clothes.

ZIG.

HARD TO PLEASE.

Said she, "Pray tell, if you can,
Why men so bashful are?
They fall in love, and dream, and sigh,
And worship us afar;
But when they strive to tell the tale,
They stutter, hesitate, and—fail.

"We ladies like a man, you know,
(Do not afraid to speak—"
And here I thought a blush appeared
Upon the maiden's cheek;
Then to myself I said, "I see,
This maiden's heart belongs to me."

Then out I spake, "Oh, lady fair,
My heart, my life is thine!
Since I so boldly speak my love,
Pray, wilt thou not be mine?"
"No, sir," said she, with wondering stare—
"Strange how presuming some men are!"

IT IS A WATER-LILY.

Some of our subscribers, we see, are a little puzzled as to what flower it is that the child in our Premium Chromo holds in his right hand. They say it is too large for a rosebud. It is. It is a cultivated water-lily. A friend of ours has one of precisely the color in the Chromo. The usual color of a water-lily, as all know, is a creamy white; but under cultivation, we believe, it can be made to assume a variety of colors.

☞ MARRIAGE.—Two persons who have chosen each other out of all the species, with the design to be each other's mutual comfort and entertainment, have, in that action, bound themselves to be good-humored, affable, discreet, forgiving, patient and joyful, with respect to each other's frailties and imperfections, to the end of their lives.

FAR APART.

Beneath the quaint old bridge you hear
The waves make music as they pass;
And, winding to the elm-tree near,
You see the pathway through the grass,
Where we were wont to walk, alas!

The river wanders as of old
Beneath the shade of willow-trees;
The sunlit waters gleam like gold,
And ripple to the gentle breeze;
But I am far from thee and these!

The sky bends over head and blue,
And, in the soft and mellow light,
You tread the lane our footsteps knew
In former days, when days were bright;
Do *these* days bring such sweet delight?

And still that lane with grass is green;
With fragrant flowers the banks are fair;
In golden glose and silver sheen
The bees still haunt the balmy air;
But you will fail to find me there.

Again, perchance, I may not see
The rustling rows of willow-trees
(Which lent a leafy canopy
When we strolled underneath at ease);
For I am far from thee and these!

Our joys forsake us. Soon does Spring
Pass by and for the Summer call;
Soon do the birds lose heart to sing,
When fading leaves in Autumn fall;
And Winter is the end of all.

"One of Life's Happy Hours!"

SUCCESS OF OUR NEW CHROMO!

We are every day receiving the most gratifying letters concerning our new Chromo, "One of Life's Happy Hours." From all sides come spontaneous praises of its tender sentiment and rich and beautiful coloring, and we think there is hardly a household in the land which would not rejoice to have the picture brightening its walls. Some of the extracts from letters received by us, we cannot refrain from giving to our readers, and one of our talented lady writers sends us this sweet poem, which we publish with great pleasure:

ONE OF LIFE'S HAPPY HOURS.

Only a picture, colored by an artist,
Yet strangely sweet and full of subtile grace,
Suggestive of the love and strong emotion,
The tender care and ever true devotion
That find in every happy home a place.

A mother, with her loving eyes uplifted
To the rare treasure circled by her arms,
Glad, hopeful glance, yet full of wistful longing,
As though up to the throne her prayers were thronging
That God would keep her boy from every harm.

And he, the chubby, winsome, smiling darling,
Eyes downcast, gazing on a lily fair,
Himself a lovely human rosebud blooming,
With Heaven's light his baby brow illuming,
And Heaven's glory on his golden hair!

Sweet picture! hailed by many happy mothers,
Who with a babe's soft, clinging arms are bound;
What bliss as pure in all the wide creation?
They envy not a queen her coronation,
While they by dainty hands are flower-crowned.

Sad picture, too, for mothers oft bereaven,
Who felt the little clinging arms unfold
And slip away, while from the upward winging
Nothing is left but memory bells a-ringing,
And a clay image laid beneath the mould.

"One of life's happy hours!" Ah! yes, most happy:
A blessed season caught from Eden bowers,
Where in the light unfading and unending,
The songs of praise forever more are blending,
And all the minutes rolled in happy hours.

SADIE BRATTY.

Another lady writes as follows:—

"Your Premium Chromo is splendid, like a rich oil painting. How it will light up my room when I get it hung on the wall in the fancy frame it will be so easy to make! I like the bright dress and the gay flowers. A wreath of ivy will look pretty trailing over upon the pillar to the right of the picture, as it grows, for ivy will grow nicely in a glass bottle hung behind out of sight. Truly it is "One of Life's Happy Hours," and that mother and child look as if they had plenty more of the same sort; as if the sunny places and the sunny hours were theirs by right. Such a handsome, blooming, dark-eyed woman, and such a chubby little yellow-haired mischief of a boy—sticking flowers where they won't stay at all, but roll down upon his bare toes at the first motion. It cannot be very agreeable to be mussed and cluttered in that way, but what does the happy mother care how much he tumbles her pretty brown hair, or pricks her forehead with the rose he is holding? The little round arms are so soft, and the tender touch of his baby fingers 'dressing mamma' go to her heart, I know, or she would not look so sweet and glad and serene under the infliction. A thousand thanks, Mr. Post, for this beautiful mother and spicy little rogue of a child. They will give me many a happy hour. By the way, that pink water-lily in the child's hand is not a fancy of the painter. There are pink water-lilies, do you know? but they are rare."

Mrs. Olive King, our graceful and witty New York correspondent, writes us:—

"It is the finest picture issued this year. It represents to the life, perfect happiness and contentment. The face of the mother is not surpassed in beauty by any of the Madonnas of the Old Masters. I shall have it framed and hung up where I can look at it often."

Miss Anne L. Forcelle, whose charming sketches have been so much admired, says:

"The picture is indeed 'very pretty,' as you say. I think it is *more* than that. The attitude of the mother is extremely natural and graceful, and the dear little fellow seems lovingly intent upon her adornment."

Mrs. J. G. A., of Newtown, Md., says:—

"I have received the Chromo, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' and am very much pleased with it."

Mrs. M. K. Williams, of Mystic, Connecticut, says:—

"I must say the Chromo *far exceeds my expectations.* The engraving 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' was very popular, but I think the Chromo will be judged by most people to exceed in beauty anything you have offered before. Please to send to the following names."

Mr. T. J. Chambers, in a recent letter, says:—

"The Chromo is indeed a gem, and every lover of the beautiful should possess a copy."

Mr. D. O., of Cheny, Clinton county, N. Y., says:—

"My parlors are hung with your Premiums, and the prettiest of all is the Chromo of 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' just received."

Mr. J. H. H., of New Cambria, Mo., says:—

"My Chromo came to hand last night, in good order, and gives me entire satisfaction. *It is a beautiful thing.*"

Mr. M. H. J., of Fairfield, Indiana, says:—

"I think the Chromo, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' is just splendid, and so does every one that I have shown it to. *It is the best Premium Chromo I have seen offered by any publication.*"

☞ When a man thinks nobody cares for him, and he is alone in a cold and selfish world, he would do well to ask himself this question: "What have I done to make anybody care for and love me, and to warm the world with faith and generosity?" It is generally the case that those who complain the most have done the least.

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—Up in Blossburg the other day a lightning-rod man drove up in front of a handsome edifice standing in the midst of trees and shrubs, and spoke to Mr. Summers, who was sitting on the steps in front. He accosted Summers as the owner of the residence, and said—

"I see you have no lightning-rods on this house."

"No," said Summers.

"Are you going to put any on?"

"Well, I hadn't thought of it," replied Summers.

"You ought to. A tall building like this is very much exposed. I'd like to run you up one of my rods; twisted steel, glass fenders, nickel-plated tips—everything complete. May I put one up to show you? I'll do the job cheap."

"Certainly you may if you want to. I haven't the slightest objection," said Summers.

During the next half-hour the man had his ladders up and his assistants at work, and at the end of that time the job was done. He called Summers out into the yard to admire it. He said to Summers:

"Now that is all well enough, but if it was *my* house I'd have another rod put on the other side. There's nothing like being protected thoroughly."

"That's true," said Summers, "it would be better."

"I'll put up another, shall I?" asked the man.

"Why, of course, if you think it's best," said Summers.

Accordingly the man went to work again, and soon had the rod in its place.

"That's a first-rate job," he said to Summers, as they both stood eyeing it. "I like such a man as you are. Big hearted, liberal, not afraid to put a dollar down for a good thing. There's some pleasure in dealin' with you. I like you so much that I'd put a couple more rods on that house, one on the north end and one on the south, for almost nothin'."

"It would make things safer, I suppose," said Summers.

"Certainly it would. I'd better do it, hadn't I—hey?"

"Just as you think proper," said Summers.

So the man ran up two more rods, and then he came down and said to Summers, "There, that's done. Now let's settle up."

"Do what?"

"Why, the job's finished, and now I'll take my money."

"You don't expect me to pay you, I hope?"

"Of course I do. Didn't you tell me to put those rods on your house?"

"My house!" shouted Summers. "Thunder and lightning! I never ordered you to put those rods up. It would have been ridiculous. Why, man, this is the court-house, and I'm here waiting for the court to assemble. I'm on the jury. You seemed to be anxious to rush out your rods, and as it was none of my business, I let you go on. Pay for it! Come, now, that's pretty good."

The Blossburg people say that the manner in which that lightning-rod man tore around town and swore was fearful. But when he got his rods off of the court-house he left permanently. He don't fancy the place.

—Wilkins noticed footmarks in the snow around his chicken-house several times early in the morning, and he felt certain that several of his best hens were missing; so he bought a steel-trap and placed it just inside the door, determined to catch the thief if possible. On the first night after the trap was set, Mrs. Wilkins was awakened by fearful screams for help coming from the yard. She was alarmed to find that Mr. Wilkins was not in the room, and she understood at once that he had gone down to the chicken-house to seize a thief, and was now being butchered by that villain. Accordingly she called up the neighbors, and when they came with shot-guns and lanterns, the whole party moved toward the hen-house expecting to find Wilkins, who continued to cry for assistance, lying weltering in his gore. Instead of that they saw him standing within the building, with a trap fastened tightly on his leg, and pinching him harder and harder every moment. When they released him he fainted—and not until he revived did he explain himself. He had been dreaming about his chickens, and he must have dressed himself, in his sleep, and gone out to look at them, for he was awakened by the trap snapping on his leg. There could be no doubt now, that the footprints he had seen had been made by himself during previous somnambulistic rambles. Anybody who wants a reliable steel-trap warranted to be good for catching chicken-thieves, can buy one at a sacrifice, of Mr. Wilkins. He has already sold his chickens. He told Mrs. W. that when the domestic barnyard fowl assumes the form of a nightmare, it becomes too great a nuisance to be tolerated patiently.

—Briggs used to be very fond of a practical joke, but he takes less interest in such things now than he did. Last Tuesday night he thought he would frighten his wife; so he went over into the bed-room and got into the closet, intending to spring out at her, when she entered the apartment. There is a spring catch on the closet door, and when Briggs was inside he pulled the door too hard, for the catch snapped and held him fast. He kept quiet for awhile, thinking what he had better do. Finally, he concluded to wait until Mrs. Briggs came over, and then to ask her to let him out. When she arrived, he spoke to her, but his tones were so muffled that she did not understand him. She only understood that there was somebody in the closet, and she was certain it must be a burglar. So she screamed for help, and fled from the room. Briggs has a very courageous brother-in-law, and he instantly flew up-stairs after his revolver, and then he fired six shots through the door in order to maim the burglar hopelessly before releasing him. When the brother-in-law opened the catch and clubbed his pistol, Briggs attempted to come out. The brother-in-law, without stopping to recognize him, whacked him on the head a couple of times, and floored him. Then they saw who it was, and lifted him up and put him to bed. The bullets only grazed him, because he stood in the corner of the closet, but Briggs's bump of benevolence is now nearly as large as a watermelon, and he has another bump the size of an egg-plant just over his reflective faculties. When he attempts to fool Mrs. Briggs again, he will let the rest of the family into the secret.

—Chubb was very much annoyed the other night by the barking of a dog in the yard of Bulwer, next door. He went to the back window with his boot-jack in his hand, and as he saw the animal plainly, he fired away at it. The barking instantly ceased, but the dog stood there quietly, and as Chubb knew that it would begin again if it remained, he determined to drive it away. So he threw an old boot at it; then he threw another, and another; but the dog remained stationary. Then he hurled all the boots he could find and Mrs. Chubb's gaiters, and finally a couple of soap-cups and three cakes of soap, and still the dog refused to budge. Then Chubb became excited. He felt as if his honor was in some sense involved, and he determined to make that dog quit and go in its kennel if he had to pitch all the furniture in the house at it. So Chubb fired a bottle of cologne and a jar of pomatum at the brute; these he followed with a towel rack; then he hunted up a blacking brush, and when that was gone and the dog still stood fast, Chubb went down in the cellar and brought up six flat-irons and the saucepan, together with the Bath brick and the albata tea-pot, and these he flung at that obstinate brute with the same unsatisfactory result. Wild with fury, Chubb got out his gun and fired at the dog a dozen times in rapid succession; but without inducing it to move. By this time the whole neighborhood were aroused from dreaming that they were at the battle of Gettysburg, and just as Chubb had fired his thirteenth ineffectual shot, Bulwer's sitting-room window was flung up and Bulwer screamed to Chubb: "What in the name of common sense is the matter with you anyway? hey?"

"Why, I'm trying to silence that confounded dog of your'n there. He's nearly set me crazy with his barkin'. What's the reason he stands so still? I'll bust the stuffin' out of him though, if he stays there much longer."

"Why, you everlasting jackass," mildly responded Bulwer, "that's a cast-iron dog that I bought to put in the garden! I stood it there over night. I'm goin' to put it in place in the morning. The other dog, the one that barked, was outside the fence in the back alley, and it went away long ago."

Then Chubb suddenly closed the window and went to bed. What he wishes to ascertain now is, whether he can force Bulwer to surrender those boots and flat-irons and things. Bulwer claims them as legitimate spoils, but Chubb doesn't consider it the fair thing.

—They have had quite an exciting time in the debating society at Barren Hill, in consequence of a discussion upon the subject of the whale that swallowed Jonah. One side contended that it was the ordinary Greenland whale, while the other side argued that it must have been a sperm whale. The controversy was at first of a friendly and conversational character, but as it proceeded it waxed fierce, the passions of the debaters were aroused, and the hall rang with the angry voices of contestants. At last Mr. Jones jumped up and said that nobody but a perfectly infatuated idiot would undertake to assert that Jonah was swallowed in the Mediterranean Sea by a Greenland whale. Then Mr. Brown shook his fist under Jones's nose, and said that if Jones or any other sperm-whale man called him an infatuated idiot he would flog him. Jones immediately emphasized his theory in regard to whales by striking Brown between the eyes. A frightful commotion instantly ensued, during which the Greenland-whale men held the sperm-whale men down and sat on them and thumped them with Patent-office Reports from the library, while the sperm-whale men bore and there made strenuous efforts to bite the noses and tear out the hair of the advocates of the Greenland whale. The combat raged for half an hour, and when the benches had all been broken to fragments, the chairs dislocated, the window panes smashed and the contestants lounged in a dreadful manner, somebody proposed that the dispute should be settled by referring to the Bible. The idea seemed a happy one, and nobody had thought of it before. Accordingly a committee of three was appointed to go out after a copy of the Scriptures. When it arrived the President began to search for the passage, while the mutilated warriors stood around, each party ready to shout over the discomfiture of the other. Presently the President stopped, and a look of dismay stole over his face. Then he went closer to the light and examined the text more carefully; then he exclaimed: "Gracious! gentlemen, it wasn't a whale of any kind! Anyhow the book of Jonah only says it was a 'great fish,' and it may have been a shark for all we know." Then the society suddenly adjourned. That Barren Hill association is, we fear, but the type of some other wise bodies which fight desperately without knowing what it is they are quarrelling about.

—Mr. Jenkins, of Brideaburg, determined to give his children some extra enjoyment on New Year's Day, and for that purpose he bought a few pounds of torpedoes, each as large as a walnut. They were wrapped up nicely in brown paper, and for the sake of safety Mr. Jenkins put them in the closet up-stairs on top of the soap-box. Mrs. Jenkins was not aware of the fact of their presence, and that evening, after dusk, she went up to get a jar of preserves from the closet. The preserves were on the top shelf, and Mrs. Jenkins, knowing that the soap box was there, determined to step upon it. Her foot of course mashed the bundle, and as soon as her whole weight fell on the torpedoes there was a terrific explosion, which blew Mrs. Jenkins out into the entry. Fully convinced that she had been shot by a concealed gang of assassins, she screamed with horrible vehemence, and Jenkins rushed up-stairs. He instantly divined the meaning of the uproar, and he told Mrs. Jenkins what it was. Then she rose and moved her legs and arms, in order to be certain she was not wounded, and when that fact was ascertained, she made a dash at Jenkins. Luckily for him his presence of mind enabled him to slide suddenly down the banister and emerge from the front door before the infuriated woman could lay her hands upon him. He stayed away from home for two days to give her a chance to cool off, and then he bought her a new bonnet to appease her wrath. The children had no fireworks on New Year, and there was silence in the domicile of Jenkins.

—They tell about a man in Maine who refused to get up and light the fire, and as his wife said she wouldn't, they remained in bed thirty-seven hours before the matter was settled. Our sympathies are, of course, with the woman, and we may be permitted to entertain a regret that it did not occur to her to perform a great deed of self-sacrifice upon this occasion. How noble and beautiful would have been the example set her husband, how touchingly would she have shown her wifely devotion, how keenly would she have made him feel his meanness if she had risen and made the fire—if she had risen, we say, and made a fire under the bed in order to rout him out all of a sudden! A woman who throws away such a chance as that is false to her duty to her sex.

☞ It is the highest duty, privilege and pleasure for great men to earn what they possess, to work their own way through life, to be the architects of their own fortunes.

1874. 1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

THE NEW YEAR.

We begin in this week's paper (No. 23), a fascinating novelet of English life entitled

THE

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BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD;

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THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873–74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

DAVY CROCKETT ON THE TRACK;

OR,

The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE," "JOHN PASSMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ABDUCTION.

Crockett was greeted with a chorus of welcoming shouts by the men assembled on the hotel porch.

"Hallo, Davy!" cried one of the foremost of these, "You're a day late. I had my ears open for the crack of old Betsy, yesterday, but the old lady had not a word to say on the subject of fat beef."

"Betsy had her hands full, you may bet on that," he replied, patting his rifle affectionately, "but she was above beef, and went in for bar. I was on my way here, boys, and set my lips for a slice of your beef, but the dog here smelt game, and took me off."

"You don't know what you missed. We had an elegant match, and some shooting that would have wakened you up to beat. What's better, we've had a fling at the fiddle all night, a first-class, double-shuffle breakdown, that would have done your heart good to hear."

"Wish I'd been around. But it's always my luck. There's always bar, or wolf, or catamount getting in my way, and I've got to do my duty in clearing the country of varmints first."

"Your death on varmint, that's sartain," said one of the men. "Did you kill your bear?"

"Kill my bar! Go soak your head, boy, in apple-jack, and then come and talk to Davy Crockett. Mebbe you never seed Betsy shoot. Who done the tall shooting at the match yesterday?" he asked, addressing the first speaker.

"Rob Gordon. He opened the bull's-eye. But he was pushed hard by another man's bullet."

"Rob won it, eh; and were pushed hard by another man's bullet," repeated Crockett, recollection of his object coming up in his mind. "You're right there, boy. He was pushed blasted hard, as I know. Who was this man?"

"A stranger about these diggings. He calls hisself Dick Brown, and was an all-fired good shot."

"Any ill blood between them?"

"Not as I saw. It was a square match."

"I noticed the fellow talking to Maggie Campbell a spell, and she didn't look to quite like it," said another of the men.

"Did Rob like it?"

"About as much as one cat likes to see another making love to his mouse."

"What sort of a looking customer is this Dick Brown?"

"He's a tall, raw-boned cuss, with heavy black whiskers, and his face a good deal more useful to him than ornamental to anybody else. Anything up?"

"Seems to me I've seen sich a critter, that's all," said Davy, walking into the house, followed by his informant. "Is he here now?"

"No, he left here about an hour or two afore daylight."

"Was Rob Gordon dancing?"

"Till about ten o'clock, or thereabouts. He hasn't been here since."

"He took Maggie home, I s'pose."

"No. There's something curious about it. She waited near all night for him, 'cause he'd promised to be back; and went away dreadful worried."

"By herself?"

"There were a party of them. She'd be took to within a quarter of a mile of home, and the balance she didn't mind."

"Was that after Dick Brown left?"

"Just afore, I think."

"Don't you think I'm too cur'us. I've got a pint to settle," said Davy. "Let's liquor first, for I'm as dry as a pine-knot, and then I want a trifle more of information."

Pouring down the fiery draughts of unadulterated whisky with a facility that showed long practice at this evolution, they seated themselves in a corner of the bar-room, tilting back their chairs in true American fashion.

"Have a chaw?" asked Davy, pulling out a huge plug of tobacco.

"Don't care if I do," replied the other, biting off a formidable mouthful.

"When I used to go electioneering," said Davy, "I always put a bottle of whisky in one pocket and a plug of pig-tail in t'other. If I met a fellow that had a vote I'd give him a pull at the bottle first. He'd be likely to fling away his tobacco to make room for the whisky, so out I'd come with the pig-tail from t'other pocket, and offer him a chaw. You see I never liked to leave a man wuss off than what I found him."

"A good plan, and brung in votes, I reckon."

"Well, mebbe a few. I was always a poor man, but never a hog, and I was always gentleman enough when I'd ask a man to drink to turn my back, so that he mought take what he wanted. A man never loses nothing by politeness."

"That's true enough. But the man ain't living that can say you wasn't always a gentleman, Davy."

"You shook a foot in the dance then, last night?"

"I'd like you to have seen me, that's all. I bet the floor danced when I laid myself out."

"Was this Brown dancing?"

"Yes, a bit."

"With Maggie Campbell?"

"Not he. Though I did see him after her. But Maggie had too many young, light-footed friends to waste time with a galoot like that. I'll say this for her, that there's not a handsomer girl or a better dancer in the country; and she's not the kind to waste time with such a slab-sided, raw-boned, rough-looking cuss."

"He stayed all night, you say?"

"I can't *say* that. I missed him out of the dance for two or three hours. But I s'pose he was out getting drunk, or mebbe getting sober. I know he come back agin afore morning, and went into it heavy."

"He must have made the whole house give with his number-twelve boots."

"You do know him then, Davy, or you've seen him and took him in. What's adrift? If it's a secret, of course I don't want to meddle, but if it's tellings I'd like to know."

"There's a mighty bad business up," replied Crockett. "Keep what I've asked you to yourself, 'cause there's some p'ints here it's mebbe best to be mum on, and I know I can trust you. It's not quite murder, but it weren't half an inch off."

"By the blessed pipers, you don't tell me that? Who is it?"

"Rob Gordon was shot last night by some infernal catamount in hiding. If I'd cotched the animile I'd made dog meat of him, jist then. But he'd got a start."

"He weren't hurt serious?" asked the other, with breathless interest.

"No, only stunned. He got his skull ploughed, kinder deep. But he'll soon be hisself agin."

"Did you track the varmint?"

"Yes, close."

"And where did he now?"

"He put his foot there where old Whirlwind lays, outside the door. That dog's too well brought up to come into the house without an invite, or he'd point you out where the fellow danced, and the very gal he led out."

"Tracked the feller here, hey? By thunder, but this is getting interesting! See here, Davy," he continued, dropping his voice to a low tone, "you've got your eyes set on somebody?"

"I have jist that."

"And Dick Brown's the man?"

"If he ain't, I'm a coyote."

"Sure of this, Davy?"

"Not betting sure. I want to see the feller's boot first. But he's mighty provender, if Rob goes under. He'd litter have a bar hug him."

"I'm with you, from topknot to toe. Free-shooting at varmints is well enough, but free-shooting at human critters ain't backwoods style."

"And what's more it's Rob Gordon that's dropped. The neatest lad in the county, and the only one that's got a true eye for the sights. He's more than a hoss, he's a steamboat; and the man that touches him wakens up Davy Crockett."

"What proof have you agnst this Dick Brown?"

"Where's the man about here wouldn't give his hair for Rob, and let an Injun shave him with a scalping knife, at that? But here comes an ill-looking stranger, that gets sweet on Maggie, and raises the old Samuel in Rob. Then comes the shooting, and Rob takes a prize from under his nose. Then the hoss gets up, and Maggie sticks to Rob, and gives this spark the cold shoulder. Mebbe there was hot words atween them to. Anyhow it's like there was jealousy, and that's worse than seventeen painters, a-smelling deer meat. Well, Rob leaves the house and goes for a bit of a walk, and this cuss ain't long in following. Rob don't come back, but a fellow they call Dr. Crockett finds him next morning, with a head opened with a bullet. But the dead murdering catamount gets back, and takes his fling in a breakdown. Do you now I'm afeard there's wuss up? He went out right after Maggie. She had a good step of the way to go alone. Who knows what game the hound's up to?"

"I can't take that in. Maggie Campbell ain't the gal to be foolwith. She's quiet enough if let alone, but rise her once and she'd be as spry and cgerous as a wild cat."

"She's a woman, and not an extra strong one neither. And she's not one of our rough-and-tumbleals, some of who could hold their own a an Injun in war paint. But Maggie's y-bred, and eddicated. She's as sperl as a young colt, I know that. But rit won't always stand agin bone and sw. I tell you I ain't easy till I hear Maggie's safe inside good oak walls."

"If there's any der, every minute makes it worse."

"That's sound sen Got your shooting-iron here?"

"Yes."

"Git it then, stick your coon-skin, and let's make tracks. Wish I'd seen this Dick Brown. If I get shape of a man's physlog in my eye-e, it's there for good. I've got his b, that's one thing. If I kin fit them toget somebody stands a chance of gettin; biler busted."

"Which way now asked his companion, as Crockett turned to what seemed the wrong road. "It's not the way to Campbell's."

"The longest way round's the shortest way home," replied the hunter. "I want to see how Rob is prospering, and it's not far across clearings to Campbell's."

"Rob's doing well enough, you can lay out your pile on that," replied the other.

"I ain't sartain of that. Sich shots often make trouble in the thinking apparatus. Rob's brain used to be as clear as strained honey, and I hope this ain't a-going to muddy it."

"Who would you call that coming, then?" asked the other, pointing down the road he had desired to pursue.

"Rob Gordon, or a bar's no blackguard! Well, I'll be tootolly dovetailed if this ain't a bit the tallest joke I've ever seed! You'd thought he was dead when I left him, not two hours ago, and here he walks up, as light-footed as a deer. There's something queer about this business."

"Let's draw ahead and meet him. He can best set our heads level."

A few steps down the road brought them close to Rob, who was walking rapidly, and somewhat excitedly, toward the village.

"See here, Rob Gordon," cried Crockett, as they met, "you ought, by all the rules of doctoring, to be laying on the broad of your back this minit, waiting to be cured. I left you dead as a door-nail, for all you knew of things. How you got over it so soon, gits me."

"I was not so bad as it looked," answered Rob. "I was badly stunned, that's true; and got a scorching furrow in my head," taking off his cap and showing the red line where the hair had been clipped away. "But it was no way dangerous, and as soon as I got my senses my strength began to come back."

"It's not right," said Crockett, shaking his head. "There's such a thing as a decent giving way to the dispensations of Providence. Your head ain't made of cast-iron, and this is flying dead in the face of human natur. You'll pay for it yit, I'm afeard."

"I may have been too hasty," he replied. "But I was so anxious about Maggie that I could not rest."

"Why, what was wrong?" asked their third companion.

"Nothing wrong, that I know of. But I promised her to be back here, and did not keep my word. I was afraid she might be nervous about me, and I thought, so long as I had not kept my promise, that I ought to set her mind easy."

"Yes, and did you?"

"No, she hadn't got home yet. I suppose the faithful girl is waiting in the dancing-room yet, for me to keep my word."

"Not home yet!" repeated Crockett, in alarm. "Are you sartain of that? Were you down at Campbell's yourself?"

"Yes. Why do you ask? Is she not here?"

"See here, Rob Gordon, there's work ahead of us," cried Crockett, in short, sharp tones, involuntarily throwing forward his rifle, and examining the powder in the pan. "We've not got a minit to lose. Where's your weapon?"

"What is it?" exclaimed Rob, affrighted. "Something has happened to Maggie? What is it? Tell me, will you? This suspense will kill me!"

"All I know is, Rob, that she started home an hour or two afore daylight. She's not here, and she's not there; and where is she? That's the question. Is your rifle at the house there?"

"Yes."

"Go fur it, then. Every minit counts. There's deviltry at work. Don't stand there looking more like a ghost than you [illegible] dead. You've no business out of bed, as I told you. Pale cheeks and trembling hands won't do when there's work ahead and nerve wanted."

"But what can have happened? What horrible—"

"Don't call up ghosts, I tell you. Go for your rifle. It's action now, lad. As long as your pins will hold you up you've got to toddle."

Without answer, though with a face of ashen hue, and hands convulsively trembling, Rob Gordon turned and sought the hotel, where his weapon had been left.

Crockett shook his head doubtingly, as he looked after him.

"The boy has no business out of bed," he said. "The sperit is stronger than the flesh with him. I ain't much afeard but what he'll hold out. There's stiff blood in Rob. But he'll mebbe break down when the burst is over. It's his nerves has took the place of his muscles, and nerves ain't to be trusted."

"Look how he's straightened up. His heart'll carry him through."

"Go after him, Joe. He ain't to be trusted alone. I'll follow the road down. It's somewhere atween Wilson's and Campbell's that we're to search. You'd better spread the news at the tavern. There's some good woodsmen there, and they'll all turn out in this business. Tell them, according to my notion, the game's headed south. We'll put Whirlwind on the trail. Any one that wants to jine in, let them strike anywhere from Sugar Hill to Jones's Misery. And don't let the grass grow under their feet. They may head off the game. You and Rob follow me. We'll go down on the scent."

Flinging his rifle over his shoulder, and whistling the dog to his heels, Crockett started off with a long, swinging tread down the road, at a speed that would soon bring him to the point in question.

Wilson's house lay about a mile from the village. It was a frame dwelling, like all in that section, but with some pretensions to size and ornament, and its floral adornments betrayed the presence of feminine taste.

A young woman, with a face as fresh as a May morning, leaned upon the gate as the hunter approached, greeting him with a welcoming smile.

"Good morning, Kate," he said, cheerily. "You're not taking a day's sleep, then, after your night's dance?"

"Not I, Col. Crockett. I've had an hour's sleep. That's enough for a Tennessee girl."

"How long have you been home?"

"About three hours, I judge. You're out early."

"Business, Kate. Didn't Maggie Campbell come home with you?"

"Yes, Mollie and I stopped here, and she went home."

"Alone?"

"Yes. But it's only a ten-minutes' walk, and the road is safe as a church aisle. I suppose she is having her sleep now. She hasn't the head I have."

"Don't brag too much, Kate. Night is a good ways off yet. You know my motto."

"Are *you* sure you're right, colonel?"

"I've a notion that way."

"Then go ahead," she answered, laughing merrily.

"Here goes then. Take my advice, Kate. Go for that snooze, or it'll go for you afore night."

Ere she could reply, he was around a bend in the road and out of sight.

There was now a straight reach of road, ending at another curve about four hundred yards ahead, just beyond which lay the home of the Campbells.

The country was cleared and cultivated, the only woodland near being a narrow line of trees that followed the course of a small stream. This ran across the road, at a depression about the middle of the straight reach.

Its screen of trees and bushes afforded admirable ground for an ambush, and Crockett's thoughts had at once selected this as the most probable spot for the abduction which seemed to have taken place.

Without hesitation, or a glance toward any other locality, he at once strode to this spot, and only stopped when at the edge of the stream.

His keen eyes now searched the road with that trained glance which had been taught to read signs of game in the most unpromising situations. The track was dry and dusty, and a slight wind which had blown during the night, had obliterated every trace of footsteps.

But near the edge of the brook the influence of the water was manifest, in a luxuriant growth of grass, between which and the water lay a narrow margin of mud.

With a quick movement Crockett bent over the prattling waters that ran down their shallow channel, scarce a foot in width, and paved with bright pebbles.

A slight depression, half marked by broken blades of grass, half stamped in the hardened mud, had caught his quick vision, and he examined it with all the hunter's shrewdness.

"Back, dog," he cried, sharply, as the animal pressed eagerly up. "Back, I say, or you'll spile the sign. I've seen Maggie Campbell's foot twinkle many a time in a dance. That's not much to go by—but it's my notion that's her mark. I'd like it better if she hadn't trod so much like a fairy. The next step she's lit clear up in the dust again. What's up there, Whirlwind?"

The dog was eagerly smelling the road just over the brook. His master stepped quickly up.

For a space of several square yards the dust was scraped up into little heaps, as if by dragging or slipping feet.

"Here's where he's took her, or I'm a sleeping weasel! The poor gal has fought hard, but the hound must have took her at odds. Right down the water side. There's a broken twig she's caught! And here's her foot-mark again. He must have gagged her and carried her from here. Her foot didn't light again, and his steps are all scraped out."

While he was thus engaged in following the marks he had discovered, Rob and his companion came up in the road, and hailed him. In a few words the results of his search were made known.

"Whirlwind will take us, lads. Only I held him back till I was satisfied we were on the right trail. It runs south, I know, for the water thins out above, and there's no cover. Come here, Rob, get your eyes on this spot in the mud. Have you ever seed a mark like that?"

"It's Maggie's footprint," cried Rob, looking upon it as reverently as a hermit might look on his relic, while a red flush came to his cheek."

"Sure of that?"

"I would know it among a thousand."

"Right then. We'll strike in. Did you start the boys, Joe?"

"Yes. There's a dozen of them on the scout by this time."

"That's clever. There's only one more p'int I want now, and my mind will be easy."

"What is that?" asked Joe.

"I want to see the hound's foot-marks. He's scraped them all out here. I'm cur'us to know if he's the same catamount that tried his hand at shooting last night."

"We are wasting precious moments," cried Rob, impatiently. "Five minutes time may give us advantage. I cannot stand here idle while the woman I love is in such fearful danger!" his face grew pallid again, as he started nervously ahead.

"Keep cool, now!" cried Crockett, holding him back by extending his rifle across the path. "We ain't lost a second. Let's be sure we're right afore we go ahead. See, they've followed the water-line down here. The hound's walked on the bottom to hide his track. But there he's slipped and struck the mud at the side. Six nails in the heel, a patch on the toe, and a flat-boat foot! All right now; drive ahead! It's the same galoot as shot you, Rob Gordon!"

Crockett rose from the bending position in which he had been examining the marks with a face full of exultation.

"Now let me fit that boot on the right foot, and match the foot to the face, and if I don't make the gentleman sing for quarter, my name's not Davy. Let out, Whirlwind, lad, you're on the right scent."

With an eager bark the dog sprang forward, his nose to the ground. But he seemed in fault, and after running about at random for a few minutes, he returned with an inquiring look to his master.

"Jest as I s'posed," said Crockett. "The snake's kept to the water, and the scent's been washed out. We've got to go cautious, for he may strike out any minit, and if we go too fast, Whirlwind mought run over the scent."

Without another word the speaker started down the stream, keeping close to its edge, and intently examining the border of the water as he did so. For a quarter of a mile they continued thus, no word being spoken, the dog running ahead in purposeless manner.

"The rascal must be up to Injun tricks, sure enough," said Crockett, impatiently. "It's heavy work wading through water and carrying a woman. But he hasn't left the run—my eyes and Whirlwind's nose are good for that."

"They are both at fault. He has left the stream," cried Rob, who brought up the rear. "He took hold of the limb there that overhangs, and swung himself out. See where the limb has swagged down with his weight and broke that bush. And the leaves are rubbed off where it struck the bush. He lit on that flat stone, and followed the line of stones there outside the bushes."

"That would be a big jump for a man with a woman on his arm," said Joe.

"He's made it, though," cried Crockett, who had stepped back. "Rob's right in that. An Injun scout himself couldn't have done better. Your eyes beat mine, Rob, I didn't think I was blind enough to miss a sign as broad as that."

"You two took the ground, I took the bushes," said Rob. "He must have struck the ground here, though I don't see any marks. But yonder's some bent weeds and a broken twig. Put Whirlwind's nose down there."

But the dog did not wait to be thus employed. He had followed Rob up into the field, and now with a quick, sharp bark, darted ahead, with his nose down, in a manner very different from his former movements.

"The dog's got it sound enough," cried Crockett. "We kin save our eyes now, lads. Let out. We must keep Whirlwind in sight. He won't stop without my whistle, and if we've got the legs to follow I don't want to check him."

Trailing his rifle, he darted ahead at a brisk trot, closely followed by the others, and keeping the dog within easy view. The route left the stream, and ran diagonally across the field they were in toward a road that lay at no great distance off. This was contrary to their expectations, as they supposed that he had made his way directly to the woodland, which commenced at a point something further down the stream, and which ran, with no complete break, westward to the Shakes. But the dog was plainly on a fresh scent. They had every reason to trust in his sagacity, and as the hunter reasoned to himself no man could tell just what another man would do, under any circumstances.

"There's a break there at the road," cried Joe. "The dog's at fault, and is nosing round for the scent."

Without answering, the hunter dashed on with redoubled speed, reaching the roadside in a few minutes.

"Jest as I was beginning to reckon," he said, in a disappointed tone, as he flung the butt of his rifle to the ground, and came to a halt, with his hands covering the muzzle. "The dod-rotted woman-stealer has took her off a hoss-back."

"No, no, that can't be!" said Rob, in a tone full of the feeling he had so long repressed.

"Don't get down-hearted now, lad," said the hunter, soothingly. "We've got six legs atween us—ten, counting the dog's—and a hoss has only got four. Besides, the boys that struck down the road'll head him off, if he ain't spry. It's not so bad yet."

"I see no hoss sign," said Joe.

"'Cause you ain't looked," said Davy. "If the hoss was here now it wouldn't be plainer. "He's been tied to that maple. See where the bark's scored with the halter. And he's nipped grass all around it. That shows that this plan was laid awhile ahead. That Dick Brown was nosing about the dance, and mought have heered their plans about going home. He's had this hoss hitched here a-waiting."

"You are right," said Rob, disconsolately. "The hoof-marks are plain. The animal was led here at a walk. The pace shows that. He went off again at a full trot. I suppose we can only follow the road down. A horse riding double can't make great headway."

"Now you're coming back to sound logic agin," said Crockett. "But there's not much use going afoot after a hoss when critters are to be had. We can horry all the horses we want down here at Johnson's, only two miles ahead. But I want to climb Round-top hill first. We may git eyes on the game from there."

"Would he dare ride by daylight down the road?" asked Joe.

"There's only two houses in ten miles, after passing Johnson's. And the men out of them is up at the Corner. This fellow knows what he's about. Let's strike for the hill."

The place pointed to was a rather steep incline, that ran up to over two hundred feet in height, and had derived its name from the configuration of its summit.

It was apparently an outlying part of the old river bluff, the main line of which lay several miles back.

Rob was about to attempt the steep slope, but Crockett held him back.

"One pair of eyes is as good as ten pair up there. There's no telling what work's afore us, and we've got to save our strength. You've lost blood and want a rest. You and Joe had best go on to Johnson's and see about hosses, and me and the dog'll mount the hill."

Without waiting for comment or dispute, Crockett, with his usual decision of manner, commenced the ascent of the slope, never once looking back to see whether he was followed or not.

It was a long and tiresome ascent, but his trained muscles were almost insensible to fatigue, and in a very short time he stood on the summit.

This was, fortunately, free from trees, though the woodland ran some distance up the lower portion of the slope.

The view was thus unobstructed, and commanded a wide stretch of country. The sun, not yet three hours high, poured a broad volume of radiance over the landscape before him, kindling it into magnificence of beauty.

A wide extent of level country lay spread out before him, as on a map, diversified by a broad reach of forest, cleared fields, humble farm-houses, and silvery lines of flowing water, on all of which the light lay in indescribable radiance.

At first sight it seemed utterly devoid of human life, a broad stretch of primeval territory on which man had but begun to set his foot.

But the present observer had no thought of enjoying the natural charms of the prospect. He had an object of more immediate importance.

His first glances ran off to the left, where a gray line through the green woods betokened a road that ran in that direction. On this his keen, far-seeing glance distinguished a few faint moving specks, apparently several miles off.

"The boys from the Corner," he muttered to himself. "They've got hosses, and are making time. Now for the catamount."

Turning, he directed his glances to the right, where ran the road he had just quitted. It was visible for a considerable distance, occasionally lost in the woods, and again appearing. His eye quickly ran down its grayish line, that passed in nearly a straight direction across the scene. But nothing movable was to be seen, save the two men whom he had just parted from, and who were making their way toward Johnson's, a farm-house that lay a mile in advance.

His keenest glances were directed to a point four or five miles in advance. Here the road left a long reach of woodland, and its gray line was easily distinguishable from the bordering green for some eight or nine miles, where it faded out in the general bluish tinge of the far distance.

Eyesight revealed nothing on this faint line, keen and well-trained as his powers of vision were. But he was provided with means of assistance to his natural vision. He drew from his pocket a small but powerful glass, which he always carried. Adjusting this for a long sight, he applied it to his eye and again scanned the road.

The whole distant view appeared as if it had approached bodily to a third of its real distance, and now he saw, plainly visible in the road, a small moving object.

"It's a double-loaded hoss, or my eyes ain't worth shucks," he cried. "Seven or eight miles start, and if he's as sharp as I take him, that hoss'll go adrift, and he'll take to the woods and his own shanks mighty soon. I've got my eye on you, Mr. Dick Brown, or whatever you calls yourself. Go it, my boy, let out as heavy as you know how, for if I don't give you a sifter of a chase my name ain't Davy Crockett!"

Replacing the glass in his pocket, he turned and ran rapidly down the hill, toward the farm-house, the dog loudly barking as he ran on in advance.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK HENDERSON'S SCHEME.

It was a striking tableau at the Blue Boat Inn, which was so sternly interrupted. The gambler stood with his pistol cocked and pointed full at the breast of the other, his eyes glaring with anger. His intended dupe faced him with a resolute glance which somewhat awed him, bully as he was. The rifle was at his shoulder, his finger touching the trigger, the barrel aimed with a deadly aim at the temple of the other.

The cards lay scattered over the table and floor, and the various occupants of the room had started to their feet, and were gazing with intense interest upon the threatened fray.

The partner of the gambler had half drawn his pistol, and stood irresolute, as if eager to aid his comrade, yet restrained by a sentiment of fair play.

At the side of the table stood the party who had spoken, a tall, stalwart man, with a resolute countenance, though marked with traces of dissipation.

Gordon, after a hasty glance into his face, had fixed his eyes upon his antagonist, with a momentary dread of discovery, yet a feeling that he must brave all such peril now, in the more imminent danger that threatened. Besides, Henderson's look had not been that of one who recognized him, and he hoped that his disguise had proved too complete for even these dreaded eyes.

"I'm in arnest, Bill Gillespie," said Henderson, as the other stood sullen and irresolute. "What's fair for the goose is fair for the gander. The man cheated, for I saw him, and you cheated, for I saw you. You played false the whole game through, and he put up one hand on you, and I'll be blasted if I don't back him in it."

"That's right, Jack," said one of the other men present. "Tit for tat is a square game the world over. Drop your muzzle, Bill, that cock won't crow."

The man addressed glanced with a sullen look into the faces round. He saw there enough to convince him that these men were not to be trifled with, that very little would induce them to supplement their words with blows. With a muttered curse he put up his pistol and turned his back on his antagonist.

Gordon had stood with unflinching resolution till this moment, ready to fire at the least hostile movement of his antagonist, though he feared that it would be the signal for his own death.

He now in turn lowered his rifle and stood leaning upon it.

"I don't want the man's money," he said, "but I won't stand being cheated out of mine, and I never was the man to be backed down by a pistol. Now that he has give in like a gentleman, I'm willing to pass back his stakes and quit square."

"You won't do anything of the kind, if you take my advice," said Henderson. "It was as neat an operation as I ever saw, and the man that shuts up Bill Gillespie's eye at a game of poker wins his stakes honest. Ain't that so, Bill?" he asked, slapping the other heartily on the shoulder.

"It's so, Jack," said the other, turning with a smile of pleasure at what he appeared to consider as a high compliment. "The boy's a straight lad, if he did raise me a bit. Give us your hand, sir, I hope it's all level?"

"Level as a barn door," replied Gordon, grasping the proffered hand, and glad enough to get so well out of the difficulty. "What will you take, gentlemen? I'll stand treat for the house," he continued, seating himself again, and pushing his chair carelessly back, till it was tilted half over on its hind legs.

This was an invitation little likely to be declined in such a company. In a very short time their glasses were filled, and they were hobnobbing with the man whose life they were ready to take ten minutes before. Gillespie himself was as friendly with his late foe as any of the others. He did not appear in the least aggrieved that the stranger was treating with his own money, and won unfairly at that.

Meanwhile Henderson was conversing aside with two or three of the others, their glances being directed toward Gordon in a manner that showed him to be the subject of conversation. This circumstance did not escape his attention, though he gave no evidence of having noticed it, and continued his hilarious conversation with the others.

"What part of the country might you be from?" asked Henderson, now coming up, and taking a seat at the same table.

"From the neighborhood of Nashville," said Gordon. "I've lived a bit in the city, and a good deal in the country around. I've seen life steamboating on the Cumberland, and I know a trifle about bear and coon-hunting. I've knocked about some in my time."

"And what's your lay now?"

"I don't know. Steamboating, if I can strike a good berth. That's what brung me here. There's some fine openings on the Mississippi."

"Yes, at poker, and such," said Gillespie.

Gordon laughed, yet did not deny the impeachment. He wished these men to take the view of his character which they appeared disposed to, and he spoke with a studied dialect different from his usual correct language.

"You're open then?"

"Yes, I've flung up my last job, and I'm on the wing for another. I've got a rifle that will find me meat in the woods, and I jest know how to feed myself in the settlements, so you see that I'm not bad fixed."

"What was your last job?"

"That's my business, boss. I don't travel round the world with my sign on my back. I'll stand whiskies, if any gentleman here's dry. But don't ask my business."

"What's the harm? It was honest, I s'pose."

"Of course it were honest," cried Gordon, with a loud asseveration that did not speak well for its honesty. "Do I look like a man that's not on the square? Fill up, gentlemen, it's my treat."

"Then I s'pose your open for something honest?"

"If it pays. That's my first question. Honesty is a good thing, but pay's not bad, and I don't let myself out cheap."

"Step out here for a minute, I want to talk to you," said Henderson, leading the way to the street.

We will not detail the conversation that ensued. Henderson was at first very guarded in his language. Gordon assumed to be unguarded in his. To all appearance the liquor he had swallowed had loosened his tongue, and he made numerous half admissions which seemed to prove that his boasted honesty was not even skin-deep.

Henderson was rapidly leading him to the desired point, and so natural was his manner that his questioner never dreamed that he was playing a part.

He at length hinted that he knew a way by which Gordon—or Thompson, as he

had named himself—might fall into a profitable business.

The latter at once displayed an anxiety to learn how, declaring that he had come down there on the make, and was open to anything safe and profitable.

Their conversation ended by Henderson's giving a hint of his object in accosting him. The party was there on a little speculation, he said, and was willing to take in one or two more good fellows, who were not afraid to take a bit of risk for a sure gain.

They had established a good paying business, that he might take a hand in, if agreeable. What it was would be a secret for the present. His honesty must be tested before he could be allowed to know any more.

"The first question with me is, the cash," said Gordon. "If the ready comes down fast and heavy, I'm your man. I'd travel with a menagerie and put my head in the lion's mouth if it was lined inside with gold eagles."

"You're the man we want. But we're not ready just yet. You will have to hang about here for two or three days, and play the innocent traveller. Keep mum to everybody but me. And don't get into fights. There are rough and ready fellows about here, and I don't want you to get a bullet through your hide. Keep an eye open for Bill Gillespie. He hasn't forgiven you yet. An old gambler like him don't like to be beat at his own game."

"I don't look much like a feller travelling for sight-seeing," said Gordon, looking down upon his apparel. "I had better play hunter a bit, don't you think? That will cover my stay here."

"It might be as well. See here, Thompson, you're a resolute fellow. You're the first man I ever saw to cow Bill Gillespie. You're shrewd, too, and handy with the cards. I never saw a cuter trick than you played him. There are two reasons why I have had this talk with you. We want no man in our company that hasn't got a quick brain and a ready hand. There's only one thing I've got to say; we're the best of good fellows to a man that's sound to his word, but the man that tries to go back on us had better travel with a coffin for a trunk. We're death, sure and sudden, to traitors."

"I don't keer three twists of a cat's tail what you are," said Gordon, with a drunken intonation. "I'm a man, every inch of me, and never went back on nobody yet. But I don't know you, and I ain't going to buy a pig in a poke."

"That's all right, man. You don't come under our rules till you're regular initiated. But when you get in once—"

"Oh, blow all that. If I turn traitor I'll stand the blunt. I don't know how you feel, Mr. Henderson, but I'm dry as a salt mackerel."

"I'm agreeable," replied Henderson. "There are some good fellows at the house who will empty a glass with us on this speculation. But, understand, that you don't know anybody but me. I and you are pals in this business, and everybody else is an outsider. Come ahead; I'll wet the bargain."

Gordon was far from being as unconcerned in this matter as he appeared. Through their whole conversation he was keenly on the alert to catch any hint which the other might let fall, from which a guess at his object could be gained.

But Jack Henderson was too old a hand to be caught napping, and the other was reduced to pure conjecture as to the character of this speculation. That it was some illegal scheme was evident enough. And that they wanted to make a catspaw of him struck him as very probable.

He debated with himself whether he should not have the whole party arrested, for the Louisville theft. Yet this was but a passing thought. He knew one or two faces there besides that of Henderson, but they were men with whom he had had no acquaintance, and he was unable to connect them with the robbery.

It was better to wait and learn who were the members, and what was the object of the gang of whose existence he had learned. If he could have them seized in the act of some criminal proceeding, his chances of fastening the former crime upon them, and recovering the money stolen from the bank, would be largely increased.

He dreaded, however, the ceremony of initiation at which Henderson had hinted. His disguise might be penetrated in such a ceremony, or he might be bound by stringent oaths which he could not lightly break afterward. He had, besides, no desire to expose himself to the Vendetta-spirit by which these law-breaking associations secured the allegiance of their members, and at which Henderson had plainly hinted.

It was his purpose then to avoid directly joining them, if his object could be achieved by any less direct means. From what Crockett had told him it appeared as if the gang had some hiding-place for the prosecution of their nefarious designs. And for the latter to have known this it was evident that it must be generally known throughout that section. This place of concealment it was important to discover, and he determined to make that his object, so far as it could be prosecuted without suspicion.

On their return to the hotel he continued his potations somewhat freely, rapidly becoming much the worse for the liquor he had swallowed. At length his head, after some uncertain gyrations to and fro, fell forward on his hands, on the table, and he was, to all appearance, lost in a drunken sleep.

The party in the room had, by this time, thinned out considerably, so that only four or five persons remained. Among these were Henderson and the two men whose faces Gordon had recognized.

After calling and shaking him to awaken him, and eliciting nothing but a drunken groan, this party entered rather freely into conversation. Yet so habitually guarded were they in their language, that, although it hinted plainly at some criminal object, nothing more definite appeared, and no word was spoken from which the nature of this object could be guessed.

It was also plain that Brownstown was only a mask upon their true centre of operations. Yet the locality of their secret hiding-place was scarcely hinted at. From some words let fall it might be conjectured to lie eastward of the town, and about five miles away. But this would have been mere guess-work. The words might have had quite a different meaning. The men spoke, in fact, in a sort of slang that largely concealed their meaning from any one not versed in their peculiar language.

The sleeper continued in unmoving torpidity throughout this conversation, and when Henderson grasped him by the shoulder and brought him to his feet, he tottered as if still overcome with slumber.

It took two of them to lead him through the door and up a flight of stairs, where, opening the door of a small room, they pitched him down on the bed as though he were a useless article of furniture.

The door had hardly slammed behind them before the head of the stupidly slumbering man lifted slowly from the pillow.

"Not quite so drunk as I look, Jack Henderson," he muttered, "though I had to take more than was good for me. I am on your track, my old friend, and if I don't pay you up for favors received, and with compound interest, then I will quit the trade of thief-taker."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 23.)

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AN ACCIDENT BY RAIL.

No storms now—a peaceful voyage, and Nantes, bright and joyous and noisy, as French towns always appear, lay gleaming in the sunshine.

The stagger had disappeared from his gait, the roar of Biscay's troubled waters had subsided into a low moan, and Templeton looked out upon another strange and fair city, without visible show of interest. Its splendid exhibitions of virtu—and what town, especially French is without them—had no more interest for him than the children's toyshops across the way. His appreciation of the beautiful was dead, for a time at least.

His only anxiety seemed to be to obtain a passport for Orleans, and that done, he strolled into the reading-room of the hotel, and took up a paper until the hour for departure had arrived.

There was a minute of delay at the depot, and it seemed to him like an hour. He was growing feverishly impatient. At last, however, the whistle sounded, and off they went at a lightning speed. At the first station he looked out.

"We are one minute and forty seconds behind time," said the conductor to the brakeman as he looked at his watch, "but that can make no difference of course—can be easily made up."

On again, with the speed for which some European routes are noted, and villages, farm-houses, and sunny landscapes seemed all blending into one picture, and then—a crash as of thunder, lightning flashes, and—nothing.

One of those incidents, so frequent to American railways had happened. There had been a collision.

Out from the debris where the dead and dying were piled in hideous confusion, a woman and a man known to each other alone were the first to emerge. Of the two, the man's face was by far the most disturbed, though both had been painfully stunned. His countenance was still livid, and his teeth chattering, when he helped her to her feet.

"For God's sake let us get on, away from here!" he cried, as he clutched hold of her arm, and endeavored to drag her along. "The very sight of this will kill me."

"Selfish! always selfish, first and last!" cried the woman, stamping one small foot, and then planting it resolutely on the earth. "Do you care nothing for the sufferings of these poor, miserable wretches here? You can go on if you will, but I shall remain here to help them if I can. There is nothing to be afraid of now."

This taunt brought an angry flush to the man's face.

"Whatever my vices or deficiencies may have been," he exclaimed, with set teeth, "cowardice has not been ranked as one of them. When we are nearly dead ourselves, I don't think we are in a condition to be helping others. Aid will come soon enough for the dying, and for the dead it makes no difference. But you will have your way, of course."

For all the attention the woman paid to his objurgations, she might as well not have heard him. She began to tear away the pieces of broken coaches, and to lift the insensible bodies one from another.

"Are you human!" she cried, once more turning passionately to the man, "and yet can stand and look down on this, without lending a helping hand? If you wish me ever to look voluntarily upon your face again, aid me here at once."

The man still with a morose look upon his face, turned to do her bidding. Some of the neighboring peasants, seeing or hearing of the disaster, hastened to the scene of action, and lent a ready hand. Two roads had joined but a mile beyond, and from this junction the telegraph wires flashed the intelligence in every direction. Tents were set up in a few hours, the dead were decently laid out, and the wounds of the sufferers were tenderly laved and bandaged.

Some of these people were remarking upon the singular beauty of face and form of one of the last victims they had drawn forth from the shivered timbers, when the man and the woman to whom we have particularly referred, came up.

"Good heavens!" suddenly cried the former, who was the first to pause. "Only look at this!"

"Ah, God! he cannot, cannot be dead!" The woman threw herself on her knees beside the insensible body. She grasped the cold, pulseless hand, she tore open the shirt bosom stained with blood, and placed her ear to his breast.

"No," she cried, "I thought it could not be. Messieurs, life is not extinct. Move him with especial care I pray you, and summon a surgeon at once. This is a man who ought not to die." They lifted him in obedience to her directions, and bore him into the nearest tent. Her companion leaned over her.

"Are we not cheated after all by a passing resemblance?" he whispered. "It is hardly possible that it is he, yet he is strangely like."

"It is he, and no other," she returned, half angrily. "Are there two faces in the world like that, think you? No. I would know him amongst a million. I shall know him on the judgment day."

She seized the coat, which the surgeon was drawing off, and diving into the breast pocket, drew forth an envelope.

"See!" she cried, to her companion. "'Earle Templeton, English.' That is his passport. Does it satisfy you?"

Her dark eyes were fixed, with a look of eager intensity, on the surgeon, as he began slowly to examine the wounds, after having unclosed the set teeth, and poured a few spoonfuls of wine into the mouth.

"Will he live?" she whispered, hoarsely.

The surgeon glanced up at her inquisitively.

"Will he live?" she repeated.

"It rests with the good God," he responded, solemnly. "The chances are ten to one against him. If his internal injuries be not greater than the outer he may revive. Nature must lend a powerful help to science, or—he is gone."

She took up her position beside him, holding alternately basins of water, surgical implements and healing draughts.

"He is English," said the doctor, contemplating his face with growing interest.

"Yes."

"And you, mademoiselle?"

"I am his countrywoman," she replied in French. "I have abundant means, and if you save him your fortune shall be made."

"I shall do my best; but he will also need skilful nursing."

"That he shall have," she replied. And she kept her word. Day and night, through a raging fever and delirium, she and the man who accompanied her were at the sufferer's side, ready to administer stimulants or sedatives as required, and reporting every change.

"I had fancied her a romantic young lady," thought the doctor, as he had time to watch her motions, when the patient had begun to mend. "Yet it seems the sinister-looking little fellow who escaped with her is her husband. It is not a relationship? Well, monsieur the husband is a fool! or he has an Englishman's stomach, to be turned at nothing. In my country the patient had better be dead already, where such a show of interest is manifested; for it would result in coffee and pistols as soon as the latter could hobble about. Married monsieur for his money, I guess, and has given her heart to the other, because—she could not help it. Well, he has a face that nine-tenths of the women in this world will go mad about. Pity they can't be rational."

Before the patient was entirely out of danger, "monsieur the husband" seemed impatient to pursue his journey.

"I will not go and leave him to the mercies of strangers," she cried, imperiously. "He must live on yet. I say again, you can go if you will."

This always seemed to silence him.

"Peste!" muttered the doctor, "he is henpecked, and yet he has the face of a Catiline. Look well to yourself and handsome lover, my lady, if he should recover."

When the sunken eyes of the patient had assumed a rational expression, and he could begin to whisper intelligibly, the lady left her post and a hired nurse waited in her stead. A few days later she settled the doctor's bill in person, and bade him good-bye.

"And you have not even been in to receive Monsieur Templeton's thanks," he said.

"His thanks!" repeated the lady, with a curious smile. "If you have given any attention to physiognomy, tell me if that man's face would indicate that he had ever had one kind or generous emotion in his life?"

"I should think so! yes," he answered, hurriedly.

"The more fool you!" cried the stranger, angrily. "But," she added, hastily, "I beg your pardon. I will not speak of my thanks, for you have my money to pay you for your trouble. Your patient does not even know me. Adieu."

"Stark mad!" muttered the surgeon. "As mad as a March hare; for there has not been a single evidence of Christian philanthropy about her."

When Templeton was scarcely able to sit up in his bed, he had struggled to his feet and drawn on his clothes. The surgeon looked at him aghast as he came in.

"I must be on my way to Paris!" muttered Templeton, with parched lips.

"For what, sir? To order your coffin in person?"

"My business is my own," answered Templeton, petulantly. "But such as it is, it must be attended to."

The surgeon thought the strange lady must have a spark of reason about her after all; and that the man before him had no gratitude.

"Sir," he replied, firmly, "you have been a great deal of trouble here, to me and others who were kind enough to nurse you; and our lives are too short, and we have too much to do to care to waste so much time in vain. You would never reach Orleans alive."

But Templeton was already in too much pain to reply, and ere the doctor could help him back to bed, he had fainted.

The next day he ascertained that in the confusion of the disaster his pocket-book had been lost or stolen.

"Good God!" he cried, in agony, "and you tell me to-day is the 22d of March, and I am this far from Paris, with bills to settle and no possible means of journeying on?"

The surgeon explained to him the kindness of one of his countrywomen, who—though an entire stranger, as she affirmed—had nursed him so faithfully, and had left money in case of a relapse to pay for other expenses.

"God bless her!" he cried, "whoever she may be! I have had at least one voluntary kindness done me by a woman."

Well for him, perhaps, that he could not dream of the bitter, relentless hatred that had led to "this one voluntary kindness."

In the evening he begged so earnestly for a sheet of paper, that the surgeon could not refuse him. The latter wrote at his dictation, an earnest request to James Barrycourt, to draw from the bank at N—— the amount of enclosed draft, and to hasten with all speed to meet him in Paris at the "Hotel de Londres," at least by the 2d of April. He would count on his friendship with a confidence that could admit of no doubt. He signed both letter and draft with his own hand, and knowing them to be mailed, grew more composed.

On the 26th, he could be prevailed on no longer, and proceeded as far as Orleans. Here he had a slight hemorrhage, from the too early exertion, and was compelled to lie over until the 30th. On the evening of that day, Wednesday, he reached Paris in a state of utter exhaustion, alone and without money.

He presented himself to the keeper of the English hotel, represented himself as a sufferer from the late disaster, to whom money would be sent from England in three days; and requested to be taken in.

The landlord looked at him one moment, and ordered him to be shown one of the best suite of rooms.

Again ordering stationery, he wrote upon a sheet of paper—

"Earle Templeton,
"N——,
"England.

"Hotel de Londres,
"Room 44.
"March 30th, 18—."

And directing to Don Sebastian Alvarez, dropped it into the mail, and took to his bed.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

INSULT AVENGED.

True to the trust imposed in him, James Barrycourt arrived in Paris on the 2d of April. He was shocked beyond measure at Templeton's wan and haggard appearance, and enjoined upon him to keep to his bed closely for some days to come, and permit him to transact all business. He found a skilful physician in attendance; and when he felt sure that it would not fatigue him too much, he drew from Templeton, by degrees, the incidents of his painful disaster. The latter was as interesting and perhaps more freely talkative than he had ever seen him.

In the morning a hectic spot burned upon Templeton's cheeks; and toward noon he requested a dose of morphine of his physician. When the doctor had given it and retired, he got up and dressed himself with great care.

"This is the excess of madness!" exclaimed Barrycourt, impatiently. "You have a high fever at this moment. One would suppose that you had an appointment to be married this evening."

"I have an engagement to which I have looked forward with an impatience that few bridegrooms have ever felt," replied Templeton, with a grim smile.

While he spoke, the bells from an hundred steples chimed out the hour of twelve; and as the last vibration died upon the air, steps were heard outside his door, and the servant in attendance introduced—

"Monsieur Jean Paul de Vaux."

Monsieur De Vaux's business was quickly explained.

He came in behalf of his particular friend, Don Sebastian Alvarez, to have the weapons, hour and grounds indicated. Monsieur De Vaux's manner indicated a thorough acquaintance with every slight punctillio of the "codes" of etiquette and "honor." Yet Barrycourt started to his feet, very much with a look as though he were inclined to kick this polished intruder down-stairs again.

Templeton laid an iron grip upon his shoulder.

"Monsieur De Vaux," said he in his smoothest accents—every particle of the feverish excitement of the past day having vanished—"let me introduce to your acquaintance, my friend, Mr. James Barrycourt; and let me suggest, in his presence, the eastern corner of the Bois de Boulogne, pistols, and as soon as possible. He will go with you to arrange the exact spot."

"By St. Dunstan, no!" blurted out Barrycourt, roughly. "No, Monsieur De Vaux, though you had a thousand French airs, I would tell you, this man was crushed in the Nantes-Orleans accident, ten days ago; and for a long time was thought to be dead. He has been out of bed one hour—against the command of his physicians—and that as I now see, only to meet you. It would be abetting in a direct murder."

Templeton was evidently annoyed; but the Frenchman's exquisite politeness was not one whit disturbed by Barrycourt's blunt enthusiasm. He bowed to his friend's adversary with evidently increasing respect.

"I can say, with confidence, for Monsieur Alvarez," he replied, smoothly, "that if Monsieur Templeton's recent misfortune renders him in any manner 'hors de combat,' the engagement can be fixed for any future time."

"No!" said Templeton, firmly. "Monsieur De Vaux, I thank you, but my answer has been given. Barrycourt, you see my hand is as steady as your own. Don Alvarez will have no advantage which he would not possess a month—six months hence. This engagement is one of too long standing to be deferred; and it must take place this evening, or my adversary may post me in every town in Europe as a coward."

The stern determination of look and words, told Barrycourt unmistakably that every objection which could be raised, would be worse than useless in the matter; and therefore, however unwilling he might be on Templeton's account, there were the only alternatives of a perpetual dissolution of their friendly relations—which would not then prevent the duel, or an unhesitating compliance with the other's wishes. Of the two evils, he considered it the part of true friendship to choose the latter; and soon after, with visible anxiety in every feature, took his departure with Monsieur De Vaux.

It was an hour or so later when he returned to Templeton's rooms, and found the latter seated at an open window, writing as composedly as he had ever seen him do in his office at N——. He looked up, pointed the other to a seat, and continued to write rapidly for some moments. Then he folded the document, and motioned Barrycourt to his side.

"You will take charge of this," he said, "and in case of my death see that all the directions concerning the child of my late friend, Carroll Tressylian, are carried out. I don't think I have anything to say which has not been expressed here. And now," looking at his watch, "is it not time for us to go?"

"Yes," replied Barrycourt, "the carriage is waiting, and everything has been arranged; but, Templeton, I should like to ask you one question," and he placed his hand on his shoulder.

"A dozen, old fellow, if you like."

"You will fire at your adversary, and not in the air this time?"

"No fears, Barrycourt, about that. Before night Sebastian Alvarez will be a dead man. He may kill me also."

"Good God, Templeton!"

The exclamation broke from Barrycourt's lips in a startled manner, and he started back, looking wildly, incredulously up into the other's face.

"What is it?"

"This is some new misunderstanding. Tell me that it is!"

"It is rather an old understanding you should call it, Barrycourt, having been arranged a year ago this morning."

"Templeton, I swear to you I would have given the best ten years of my life never to have known this."

"What, that a man can fight from a sense of honor and not from temper?" asked Earle, with a frigid smile.

"My God! how much more venial in the eyes of God and man is temper than deliberate malice!"

"It is principle. The man struck me a blow which I could not resent."

"And you have waited for the expiration of your oath to try to take his life for it?"

"There can be but one answer—one retaliation, for such an insult."

"One word more, Templeton, in Heaven's name. When you were devoting so much of your time to practice in the shooting-galleries, it was not for this?"

"Only for this. Did he not tell me he was the best shot in Europe?"

To Barrycourt these unfeeling, brutal words came like a thunderbolt. His devotion for the man before him had been supreme, for the reason that he had considered him above all ordinary weaknesses or passions; and now to feel that the other was about to attempt a great crime was more than he could bear.

"Templeton, Templeton," he cried, "it will be nothing less than murder!"

"Impossible, where the danger to both is acknowledged and equal. The law is against you, Barrycourt, you must see. Come."

A quick drive through the gay, beautiful city, soon brought them to the grounds. Sebastian Alvarez was to be seen walking to and fro rather impatiently across the plateau.

"Only let the arrangements be quick," he said with a nonchalance that went directly to the hearts of Mons. De Vaux and the surgeon, "or I shall be too late for the train that goes to Berlin."

They were placed opposite each other, with weapons in hand, and the signal began.

"One!"

Poor Barrycourt's feelings were indescribable as he looked at Templeton, and saw the cold smile on his lip, the gleam of deadly hatred in his eye. He would almost have given another decade of his life to behold a squad of gens d'armes rushing up at the moment, and secretly cursed himself for not having lodged information against them at any cost.

"Two!"

Only a gay bird swooping above them; and the beating of Barrycourt's heart was almost audible to De Vaux as he looked at him in silent contempt.

"Three!"

There was the wave of a white death signal in the air, instantly followed by the sharp, simultaneous report of the two pistols; and the surgeons and seconds looking eagerly, saw both men measuring their length upon the earth.

De Vaux and his physician hastened in alarm to Alvarez. He had fallen upon his face; and as they lifted him, the dark red blood was seen gushing from his breast and staining the grass at their feet.

"Oh, Olave, my darling! this will break your proud heart. Doctor, De Vaux, lift me—I am dying." And he fell back in their arms a corpse.

Templeton was also bleeding profusely, and had not spoken at all.

That night two telegraphic dispatches passed over the lines—one to Berlin, and the other to Don Juan de Alvarez at Rome. Both were worded alike—

"Don Sebastian Alvarez was killed this evening in a duel with an Englishman, who is also reported dying. The remains of Alvarez will be forwarded at once to Berlin.

"PARIS,
"April 33. 8.30 P. M.
"18—."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

STILL ON THE TRAIL.

The reader will please permit us the privilege of the novelist, and allow us to pass hurriedly over a period of sixteen years.

To the young who look forward with eager expectancy to the consummation of life's hopes—hopes that never are to be realized in this world—sixteen years may well appear an endless immensity of time; but by the weary, saddened glance of retrospection, how quickly is it measured?

Were we to chronicle intangible dreams—those feasts of Barmecide that never can satisfy the hungry cravings of the soul—disappointed aspirations—despairing, desolate heartaches; anguished nights of sleepless wretchedness, and alas, too often of remorse—our story might indeed be indefinitely protracted; but to the lover of incident, the time, though long it may be, which we propose to drop from our narrative, would be devoid of interest.

To the characters still figuring before the reader, in our last chapters, these years had, of necessity, brought many changes of feeling, and some of purpose, but we propose to allow them gradually to develop themselves in the work before us.

To George Chester—patient, noble, persevering George Chester—they had brought increase of work, of fortune and of fame; and for the perfection of his own scientific attainments, and the benefit of a larger number of his fellow-beings, he had removed to London. He had been repaid for all his efforts in her behalf, by seeing Lucile Weston arrive at years of maturity, intelligent, grateful and accomplished as her childhood had promised, and by seeing her established with a handsome salary as teacher in the school at which she had graduated with marked honors. Her mother had died some years before, and her two brothers had emigrated soon after [illegible] as they reported, rapidly making a fortune.

To James Barrycourt, those years had brought an established reputation in his profession, some lines of care upon his brow that had not been there when we last beheld him, and an almost yearly increasing number of olive-branches in the domestic circle.

But perhaps in real or legendary narrative a more complete metamorphosis had never taken place, than that which had been wrought in the hero of our story, Earle Templeton.

Lying for eight long, excruciating months a helpless, bed-ridden invalid at Paris—his life despaired of almost every hour of the time—his wonderful vitality had enabled him to rise up, despite the prediction of his nurses, and the expectation of his friends, and to recover, though slowly and painfully, his former vigor of mind and body.

"What a iron constitution!" declared his surgeon unanimously, when in defiance of their probes and pills, he was once more pronounced out of danger. "Do Cassinac of Orleans affirmed that nine men out of ten would have died of the wounds he received in that terrible railroad disaster, and here every other man but himself, would have perished on the field of the late mêl. As an octogenarian he may still amble at Westminster."

Barrycourt had remained at his side for months away from his wife and home—faithful and assiduous in his attentions; but as he averred declared to Templeton, all his own efforts in addition to those of his famous surgeons would have been of no avail, but for the sleepless, unflagging vigils of an English lady of great wealth, a Mrs. Chelsea, who had taken her post at his side on the night of the 3d of April, and had never deserted him until he was declared out of danger. Barrycourt had wished to relieve her with hired nurses; but she had refused to relinquish her post, and the surgeons had pronounced her worth a hundred of the best whom money could procure. It was altogether a circumstance so unusual, that it could not fail to excite comment even in Paris.

"I should be considered Mr. Chelsea a myth, and if she had formed some matrimonial schemes on her handsome patient," Barrycourt had lightly remarked to Templeton when the latter had commenced to improve, "were it not for the fact that I have seen and conversed with her consort; as unprepossessing a fellow as you would be likely to meet—has never looked me in the face yet, and always avoids me, if possible—a downright hang-dog expression of countenance. He has never yet been in to see you since your first return to consciousness. Don't think he endorses his lady's Nightingale propensities. And she doesn't look amiable. Sometimes I have had the notion in my head that she might poison."

"An odd fancy indeed," replied Templeton with a repressed groan. "She has had opportunities enough to execute such a charitable design, I am sure."

"Then Cervantes should be alive to paint a feminine Quixote," continued the other, but hastily, "for do what I will I cannot understand it."

"Would you expect, if you had the wisdom of Solon, to understand a woman?" muttered Templeton, turning away. "But I suppose my thanks are at least due."

The first time he was awake after this in Mrs. Chelsea's presence, he began some brief expressions of a formal gratitude, for in him of humors he had never been verbose where his personal feelings were concerned, and she had astonished him by an equally brief—

"I do not want thanks from you," which had sounded like the very concentration of bitterness, and had hurried from the room, nor had she returned until he was again unconscious.

He made no similar attempt after this, and she was as uniformly silent. But sometimes the half-mournful, half-malignant intensity of her dark eyes worried his increasingly irascible temper, until in a sort of delirium he would wish her a thousand miles away, or even "at the devil," to be rid of her presence; but, strangely enough, he gave no expression to these thoughts.

On one occasion the portly surgeon in charge, with the pompous dignity of his station, had undertaken to congratulate her on the conspicuous aid she had rendered in restoring their interesting patient to life, but she had cut him short with the half-angry rejoinder—

"I am paid for my services, as you are for yours, though in a different way. I have saved his life, you say, and I would do that again, at any sacrifice to myself or others; but I would not have assuaged one pang—I would not have had him suffer one whit less for all of Paris."

The surgeon had asked Barrycourt briefly if either he or the patient had ever previously known Mrs. Chelsea; and being told that they had not, he had tapped his forehead, with a slight smile on his lips, and had dismissed the subject. But after that his own eyes frequently followed the nurse when he appeared to be giving his attention elsewhere.

As soon as Templeton had become generally lucid, and was declared out of all positive danger, she had quietly and without announcing her intention disappeared. Nor had she returned.

When Earle Templeton had recovered strength enough to travel, he quitted Paris with all its painful associations, and set out on an indefinite tour through other countries. He was glad to turn his back even upon Barrycourt, and find himself once more alone, when he could indulge his own morose fancies without interruption. At first he had experienced only a savage gratification, which all the pangs of his excruciating sufferings could not destroy, that with his own hand he had taken the life of his enemy. He had felt no remorse of conscience. Acquitted by the civil, he had never asked himself whether the moral law had sanctioned his deed. His pride had required of him to avenge the only insult ever offered to him, and he had done it, done it to the full.

When the wounds of his body were healed, and he had turned his back upon all who had ever known him, he had no idea that he carried in his bosom a fester that would fret and rankle there with worse than the bitterness of death, when those others had grown callous and been forgotten.

The knowledge of his position had come upon him little by little, long before he had imagined even in part that his destiny had been wrought by his own stubborn will; and the desolate feeling deepened and widened the farther he wandered, or endeavored to wander, from the scenes that would recall those old associations.

There was a helpless sense of disappointed hopes and frustrated ambition; a hopeless consciousness of all that he had lost—love, friendship, fame and faith. The grand air-castles of a few years back were all gone, and in their place abided unsightly ruins and waste lying around him, unbroken and arid as the deserts through which he roamed. Yet his griefs and in them the germ of selfishness, that prevented him from "sorrowing unto repentance."

He mourned in truth for the noble and chivalrous friend of his youth, the ever-gracious, urbane, tender gentleman, who had been snatched away from the brilliant harvests of his useful career, and from the endearments of his splendid home, by a foul and most atrocious murder. He grieved for those broken hearts, so much alike, and yet so unlike, that had gone with seeming joy to that land "where the weary are at rest," and he fretted that he, too, had not been permitted to die and be in oblivion of such sorrows.

A settled despondency fell upon him, from which he had no thoughts of ever being freed again. He wandered from country to country, carrying this burden with him everywhere. The weight of it at last began to crush him; he drooped and grew moody by turns, when he fancied that it would never be lightened.

Then he began to think that he was giving way; that death was coming at last, and that he would like to rest beneath the sod of his native town. With this thought he would turn back in haste, that his spirit might pass away in the presence of some familiar object or face. Rallying again, and feeling like a second Ahasuerus, he would retrace his route, and press further on, from place to place, seeking for he could not tell what, and vainly hoping that he might leave something behind.

So he passed on and roamed, like one in a painful somnambulism, through remote towns, about palaces and temples and cathedrals, listening to eminent divines and mighty cardinals, looking upon masterpieces of painting, of statuary, of every art; standing on battle-fields, and among the ruins of places handled reverently by the pen of history or of fancy, bearing his crushing burdens through all, until a listlessness, born of his brooding sorrows, fell about him and enveloped everything like the shadow of night.

For more than two years he roamed objectlessly, as it seemed, from country to country and city to city, sometimes lingering for weeks in places seemingly devoid of interest, and then flashing, as fast as steam could carry him, by leading points to every tourist. The mighty deserts and mountains of Asia were roamed over, and if those vast solitudes appealed to his soul, there was no evidence of it in face or manner.

At last, he could not tell why, he turned slowly back, with the same old feeling heavy upon him. Through European Turkey and Austria, and along the vine-clad valley of the Danube, the Basin of Bohemia, and among the romantic mountains at its head. Here the spell came on him, and he lingered—wandering aimlessly about. He had made Dresden his headquarters, but each day found him still on the alert, and sometimes a crypt of the mountain formed his resting-place for the night.

One evening, as he descended the mountain's side into the basin below, the beauty of the surrounding scenery suddenly arrested his attention, and impressed him as it had never done before, in scenes that might naturally have better awakened his interest. It may have been the perfection of its tranquillity blending with the beauty that chanced to strike him at the moment. At any rate, a sense of harmony that was near akin to peace, began faintly to stir his soul. For the first time he felt something like a wish that he might be a better and more amiable man.

He reached the basin as the evening's

sun was lighting up the distant snow-capped mountain peaks with a supernal glow; and looking before him, he beheld, above a grove of trees, the towers of some grand old castle. The romance of the place, with its associations of perhaps several centuries, drew even him with a feeling of singular interest, and lost in thought that unconsciously had less of oppression than he had known for years, his steps guided him in the direction of this ancient domain.

As he came more fully into a grove which art had helped to form, he found himself suddenly fronting a grand mausoleum of dazzling white marble that had an air of freshness in style, at chilling variance with the huge monastic pile beyond. Yet there was a beauty and splendor too—a costliness about this single structure of art, that could not fail to strike the beholder with curious awe. As he moved around this magnificent tomb—over which the stately trees arched solemnly—the sound of a stifled sob made him pause involuntarily; and glancing around, he beheld the figure of a young and beautiful woman prostrate before the door.

"This too is some recent and ghastly grief," he murmured, and fearing that his presence if observed might create alarm, he took a soft step backward, by which he was shielded from view by a pillar of the august dome. Standing thus with head uncovered, the woman's cry came distinctly to his ears.

"Oh, my God! my God! have mercy, and take me also. Or if I must live on, at least let vengeance fall on his murderer, and may his life be made as desolate as mine."

There was a choking sob—then a moment of profound silence, and Templeton from his hiding-place heard her as she arose to her feet, and passed out at the little gate. When he ventured to glance out at last, the woman's figure was descried, vanishing among the distant trees. Templeton waited a moment and then slipped forth.

"So," he murmured, "the man to whom this costly shrine was erected was murdered—taken by a sudden and terrible death from the arms of his beloved. Such records of crime are in every spot; and still the world is not destroyed, nor, as it would seem, have the laws of the land avenged this deed. May Heaven then answer the woman's prayer, with swift retribution upon the murderer."

He came slowly around, where the declining light of day fell upon the arch above the door, and there he read:

"Sacred
To the memory
of
Don Sebastian Alvarez,
Count of Montejo and Castile,
Who was murdered by an Englishman at
Paris,
3d of April, 18—.
Erected by the order of Countess Olave
Alvarez,
His afflicted widow."

Standing there, with the shadows of the declining day upon all about him, Earle Templeton read this inscription through with straining eyes and suspended breath, while the owl hooted its mocking notes in the trees above him; and throwing his arms above his head, with a wild, unearthly cry, the night came down in mercy upon his maddened brain, and he fell upon the beaten earth like one dead.

How he woke up in the ghostly moonshine, and fled on—on, anywhere away from that place—as though the avenger of blood were at his heels, he did not afterward know. Still, like one accursed, he wandered on, until guided by some instinct, intuition or inspiration, he knew not what, he found himself once more at Naples, prostrate before the grave of the woman whose dying benediction he had received, while secretly cherishing thoughts of murder against her nearest of blood.

Lying there, beneath the skies of an Italian heaven, with the sound of distant music coming like a softened requiem to his ears, tears, whose blessed relief he had not known since manhood's years had been upon him, came, in the mercy of God, bursting from his pent-up soul, and with his weary and world-stained brow pressed upon the earth that covered her dust, he wept as he had never wept before.

From that agony of remorse, Earle Templeton gathered strength once more; and rose up, as he believed, an altered man.

And altered indeed he was. Less morose, he was sadder in reality than before; but he remembered that he still owed something to himself, and the gifts with which Heaven had endowed him. All his old energy came back—without the fever that had previously attended it—and hence with a more certain promise of success. In the land of Dante, Petrarch, Alfieri and others, sublime idealities like theirs crowded upon him. Without form at first; but gradually out of the chaos distinct form began to emerge.

It was then that the idea of becoming an author first dawned upon him. As naturally as he sought refreshments when hungered, or roamed through the fields when restless or in need of exercise, so now he took up the pen to find relief for surcharged thought and feeling.

Partly from his own experiences, a romance was developed beneath his hand; and when it was completed, he found a ready publisher.

The bold, vigorous thought—from first to last—could not fail to attract the marked attention of the public, and Templeton come back to his native land to find that he had won a world-wide reputation. His name swelled the columns of every newspaper; and he was dined, and toasted and courted, until sometimes he felt much of the old longing to fly to some remote corner of the earth, where the bruit of public fame could never reach him, and live and die in the peace of unrecognized obscurity; but the dominance of his strong will was still asserted; and he kept to his post, and went on increasing in honors and in fortune.

Anonymous letters, by the bushel, congratulated him upon the great good he was doing in the world; but these offered no incentive for further exertions—brought no sweet savor of incense to him. The grand element of selfishness had not yet been uprooted from his nature. He had never once confessed the goodness of God in all that he had realized. He believed that what he had accomplished, he had done by the invincible might of his own energy—and from these thoughts were born a yet greater pride, and a haughty, almost insolent air of superiority over his fellows. The practice of his profession was resumed, and he was employed in private and national litigations. His adversaries dreaded the pungent severity of his satire; and when he willed it, the testimony of intelligent and truthful witnesses was often falsified by his rapid, remorseless cross-examinations. In this way he had many bitter enemies, and but few warm personal friends.

Beautiful and eminent ladies began alternately to smile and to sigh in his presence; but he smiled back in his sleeve at them, and went on his way rejoicing that for the remainder of his life, he was at least never again to be wounded by the poisonous arrow of love.

How often in our lives do we imagine likewise; when the shekinah of our souls has never been penetrated by the light of this divine passion.

And thus those other years of his life had passed away.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 16.)

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

BY SPHINX.

The town clock had just droned out three when the night bell of Dr. Stocker's residence pealed through the house. The physician was a very sound sleeper, consequently the personage on the top step made a second dive at the bell. A long pause—then a third pull. The passing watchman heard some sort of a soliloquy, probably more decided than that of Hamlet. After short, abrupt reminders, and long reverberating peals, sundry kicks and bangs, he punctuated them with—

"Hello the house! Hello the whole family! (Jehosophat, how he must snore!) I'll break everything to splinters! I'll smash up everything! Hello, I say! It's the baker with the rolls! It's the milkman! It's the telegraph chap! (May I be forgiven for those ere fibs.) Fire! water! thieves! murder!"

"Who's there?" growled the old doctor, deaf and irate.

"Me!"

"Who's 'me'?"

"Nat Toby!"

"Louder, sir."

"Oh, now you needn't make believe you don't know me, old night-cap." Then making a trumpet of his hands, he yelled: "N-at To-by!"

"Well, what do you want?"

"I don't want nothin'—except that half-dollar you owe me for ketchin' your horse," he added, sotto voce.

"Tell me instantly who does want me, young man."

"Little Dan Tucker," bawled Nat, "and that mighty quick, old snorer," he added, four keys lower.

"What's the matter with him?" screamed the doctor.

"Hip-raps!" vociferated Nat.

"What?"

"Molly-grubs!"

"Louder."

"Colly-wobbles!"

"No trifling, young man," said the night-capped Æsculapius, drawing his head in, like a turtle into its shell.

"Them's my sentiments,—'no trifling.' Why, it's a case of life and death—so, get your wig on, and hurry yourself, old boy; and if I don't hang on to your old peach cart, my name is not Nathaniel."

It was some time before they started, and the good doctor took Nat in beside him, which tickled that worthy immensely, though he commented in whispers several times on the doctor's careless driving, and on the gait of his "rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay." When they drove into Allen's Court the doctor got out, with a grunt, and told Nat to hold the reins. On account of the mud they had stopped at the corner, so the doctor walked to the fifth house and knocked. A window was opened, and a woman's head protruded.

"Well!" said he, looking up.

"Well!" she responded, looking down.

"Don't keep me waiting here all night," he said, crossly.

"Humph, I sha'n't keep you a-waitin' one second," she retorted, emptying a cup of very cold water on his head, and banging the window down in a jiffy.

Almost swearing, the enraged man called Nat, who came up to him on a run.

"Why, I told you it was the sixth house, a-comin' over," he exclaimed, between low giggles.

"You didn't."

"That's what I say, I didn't (over the left!) Well, that was old Marm Peppercorn that was. Guess she took the starch out of your shirt-buzzum, maybe?" he insinuated.

"Silence!" thundered the doctor, as old Tucker admitted him, and shut the door in Nat's face, which was vainly endeavoring to thrust itself in and get a sight of his playmate.

Poor Dan, a thin little mortal, with a wee face, a wizen little pug nose and enormous gray eyes, had expended his last coppers at the corner grocery upon the greenest of gooseberries, and in consequence thereof lay upon his straw pallet kicking like a young flea. Nat amused himself outside by low remarks, to keep off the spectres of the night, probably.

"Now to think of me being out here in a kerridge this time of night! And to think of old Stocker a-ringin' Peppercorn up! ho! ho! ha! ha! ha! and to think of that little nipper Dan a-screechin' from one gooseberry too many—this is a mighty queer world—who knows but what I may be a-doctoring some day meself? there's no tellin', and I may be President of the United States some day, there's no knowin'. Hope Dan ain't a-goin' to hop the twig, for he owes me six marbles! Get up, old horse—ga lang! here! whoa! whoa! whose a-doin' anything to you?"

A door banged, the physician came up to his carriage, "I wish you wouldn't worry my horse—stop pulling him in so tightly!" said the doctor.

"Pooh!" said Nat, under his breath, "there's nothing to curb in this old rocker—so don't be afraid, Pills; you told me to pull in, yes, sir," said he aloud.

"Nothing of the sort; said no such thing!"

"I said you didn't," Nat bawled; "of course not, whoever heard of such a thing?"

At last they drove up to Bayard street, as the wheels scraped the curbstone, a dark figure arose.

"Now who on earth is that?" muttered the doctor, ill-pleased at the prospect of paying another nocturnal visit.

"A bummer, I should say!" said Nat. Indeed, there was something carelessly poverty-stricken in the loose, shabby fit of the clothes discernible in the cloudy moonlight; but the old doctor caught a certain lordly gesture of the hand, and an exclamation escaped him.

"Sir?" said Nat, in response to it, and leaning out of the carriage.

"Drive on to the stable, boy!" he replied, sharply, as he turned with an unwilling nod toward the advancing figure.

"Well, you're back again, I see!" he said, pulling out his dead-latch key.

"Yes, father, and back for better purposes, I hope, sir," the man replied with a deep sigh. The sigh was re-echoed as the doctor pushed back the front door admitting them to the dimly-lighted hall.

"How many times have I heard that before, Leighton Goddard?" said Dr. Stocker, sternly eyeing the tall, shabby figure before him, with one very handsome hand resting upon the balustrade.

"Let me tell you, sir," the other commenced, removing his hat.

"No! no! I know it all! put out the light; come to bed, you'll find one made up in the spare room, I presume, I don't want to awaken Edna, she's very tired!"

"I am awake, uncle!" a voice exclaimed at the head of the stair. "Is it Leighton?" she asked, bending forward.

"Yes," said the doctor, "I suppose he can go in the spare room?"

"If you wish it, but his own room is ready, it always is."

Her hand was grasped suddenly; the poor owner's heart was throbbing violently, the last sentence was the only welcome he had received. It was the old story of the prodigal son, only in this case the relationship was a step removed by his mother's second marriage with Dr. Stocker. He was a boy of thirteen then, and the doctor's pet, the only child of the house, and one the physician had relied upon as a stay for his old age. But then all that was passed, as they both knew, and worse than an utter stranger, he stood near the woman he loved, not daring scarcely to greet her.

"Edna, one word," he whispered on the landing.

"To-morrow, Leighton; good-night," she said, passing on, and lighting the old doctor to his room. But when she went up to her own apartment it was not to sleep, but to sit down in her old place by the window, and to think as she had done many a night before, the same thing over and over again. What was it, but to review her uncle's patience, his well-exhausted patience, and Leighton's broken promises. A lawyer, with talents that many would envy, a presence elegant and gentlemanly, a heart generous and sympathetic, he was greatly beloved, till he failed to stand the test of the world's favor, sinking and rising in the swift current of evil, till at length, in deepest waters, he disappeared for a long time from the accusing finger of public blame. That it was the story of thousands did not console Edna Deane, as in the silent night her heart bled for his unworthiness; and yet, my fellow-creatures, there was a bitter protest against all uncharitableness she thought, in the fact that his father drank before him. No one but her God and the "recording angel" knew what she had done to save this man; how she had forgiven him not only seven times but seventy times seven. How she had loaned him money when he was penniless, hid his weakness when he was past doing it for himself, prayed, when the meaning of prayer was lost to him, encouraged him when others discouraged, defended him when he was almost beyond defence. Is it any wonder he loved her? Is it any wonder he clung to her as a drowning man clings to a rope? Is it surprising that in his weeks of abstinence, when he grew dimly to regard himself as an honorable man, answerable for his expenses and for his actions, that in his repentance he worshipped at a shrine where there was the "charity that suffereth long and is kind;" where there were great, strong, helpful words rained down upon him, and two true, compassionate eyes meeting his, when the world's back was turned upon him? "But the night was far spent"—for both in their misery of retrospection, and the morning dawned almost too fair for painful eyes to open upon. When Leighton Goddard entered the breakfast-room there was no trace of the shabbiness of the evening attire. Edna, poor girl, had with careful hands laid a new suit and nice linen on the bed, so that her cousin might appear his best in the uncle's eyes. The doctor hardly looked up from his newspaper when he entered with his old, habitual easy grace, and clasped his cousin's outstretched hand. She saw, with a wildly-beating heart, the renewed hope for himself and for her in his face, but with her wide experience of hereditary sin, she knew it was but a brilliant ember shooting upward—a gleam of false hope, but she covered all this thinking with a warm, beautiful smile, and he sat down gayly, awaiting patiently his step-father's notice.

"Well, Leighton," said the doctor, after a time, "what do you intend doing for yourself this time?"

The young man flushed distressingly, but he recovered himself sufficiently to answer—

"I thought of opening my office again, sir, in Arle street."

The doctor smiled contemptuously, but his brow soon clouded.

"There's one thing I'd have you comprehend, sir—you remain in my house just so long as you prove yourself worthy to remain, and not an hour longer—you understand?"

"I do."

There was an uncomfortable pause, during which the doctor finished his coffee, and departed on his morning round in silence. There was a still longer silence before the two who remained spoke. Leighton's breakfast was untouched, and a hopeless, inset shame weighed his eyelids down. But his gayety returned when Edna said:

"Eating nothing is a poor beginning, Leighton."

He understood the significant kindness of the remark—he even tried to drink cream and sugar in his coffee, lest she should suppose the strong essence was a mere substitute for the brandy he could not procure, as is so often the case in intemperance.

As the servant entered, they crossed the hall into the doctor's little study; as Leighton closed the door, he exclaimed, with his delighted eyes resting gratefully upon her:

"Edna, darling, you are lovelier than ever—oh, if you knew how intolerable these long months have been without you—but you don't—and you never will!"

She had drawn back a little, her face paling—her heart and judgment battling as they had been all along, but her resolution was taken—and yet she was warding off its utterance.

"Let us talk about the office-opening, cousin!" she uttered the last word purposely, but he did not seem to notice it, as he drew a small ottoman and sat down upon it at her feet.

"Do you think I can get anything to do?" he commenced, nervously.

"I've no doubt of it!" she said, cheerfully.

"But, Edna, every one knows me here, and yet I could not stay away from you longer. Maybe I can stick to something with you to look up to—to work for—and, Edna—don't turn away! don't! oh, listen to me—if I succeed, will you trust me—will you be my wife? Do you know I am a new man? I haven't touched a drop of liquor in two months, just think of that!" he exclaimed, in great glee. She tried to speak. He seized her hands. "Say whether you consent to marry me or not; you love me, Edna, don't you?"

Love him, could any woman love him more?—aye, she loved him too well to ever marry him. She had no time for self-pity now, that would come in the lonely hours of the night—no the brave heart hushed its agonized claim into its deepest recesses, and rebounded to answer for sacrifice, a love in itself whose depth it takes a Christ to comprehend.

"Now, Leighton, you know it is best to show your father a practical intention; and no aid to serve you, as far as I am concerned, will be wanting. I say, go down town now and see about getting your business started as soon as possible, and, dear cousin, look up, not around you—when you begin!" she almost whispered.

Inspirited by her encouragement, and perhaps misled in the thought that should he succeed she would—"but no!" he thought, "I'll wait for that—how dared I make such a proposition now?" he asked of himself, and acting upon the impulse of the moment, he put on his hat, and suited the action to her words.

The next day, as Dr. Stocker was driving up Arle street, he saw the well-known tin sign up in its old place: "Leighton Goddard, Counsellor-at-Law," and people hinted around remotely to know whether at last there might be any dependence placed upon the stability of its owner. To tell of Edna's helpful words for her cousin, and the patient, hopeful words to her uncle, her own anxiety and many sacrifices, would not convey to any other mind who has never known this aching, doubtful, struggling hope, anything of its meaning or duration. Spring glided into summer, and the summer mellowed into autumn, and the frost tracery of the early winter left its diamond hieroglyphics on the window panes. Leighton Goddard, cheered by daily increasing occupation, was rising rapidly in the esteem of the doubtful public; the doctor was unbending gradually, and Edna Deane, invigorated with the course things were assuming, began to sing at her work, and be less watchful of her cousin.

But one night, however, when Dr. Stocker was out of town, Leighton Goddard did not come home to tea, and it was past midnight when Edna opened the door for him. She uttered no reproach. Ah, friend, how could she? What is there to say, when the dead alone are so often accountable for what the living have to bear? Had he not tried—had he not succeeded for a time—but when the frenzy of thirst possessed him he yielded to it, as the wavering mind yields to lunacy, as unsound being yields to epilepsy or any other disease. She took the nerveless hand and looked up into the intensely pale face with its dim, melancholy, averted eyes—for one moment only; then watched him ascend the stair. It was not the step that faltered—nay, these are the men who live a brilliant flame of youth, beauty and mind, and die of brain-diseases young. He knew enough to turn and read her countenance, but he said nothing.

There's no knowing how this commencement might have ended, had she not concealed it from her uncle, and surreptitiously sent nourishing food down to his office daily, to prevent the gnawing craving for stimulus. No one dreamed of the misstep—business awaited him on all sides—and yet once again in the winter it happened; and in one night he spent all he had made in three months.

The following summer Dr. Stocker died, leaving all his property secured to his niece.

A week after his death, Leighton Goddard met his cousin as she was coming in from the garden.

"Edna, let me speak now; there is no one to take care of you; we shall be separated from this moment, as I must go to a hotel. So I must speak to-day. Tell me if there is any hope for me. Do you love me?"

She stood before him in her sweeping mourning robes—a woman pure as a lily—but her great love sent no blushes to her cheek. She knew of women who talked of marrying men to save them—but the result in nine cases out of ten, she knew to be just the opposite. Even while he was talking, she knew he was trying to hide the fact that he was again sinking in the undertow that was strongly, swiftly carrying him out with the tide, into the ocean of eternity. She knew no love of hers could ever save him; no life-long companionship of hers could meet and overthrow the inborn enemy of his higher nature. And oh! how she prayed as she stood there!

"Leighton," she said, at length, "I love you as a friend who would lay down life itself for your reclaiming. As a wife, I should perhaps fail therein. God keep you! I must live solitary—I can live for you, if not with you."

"Take that back—and so help me God, I'll never let another drop touch my lips!"

But she stood still, grew weaker and whiter under his entreatingly sad eyes; then she leaned forward—but drew back again with acute remembrance of her duty, and passed away from his sight unsteadily.

* * * * *

Years went by. He tried again and again to keep his word, and failed. And the sun rises and sets on their days of endurance here, as one day it will arise in untold glory in a world where temptation is not, where there is "neither sorrow nor crying," and where former things shall "have passed away."

☞ A Springfield girl threatens to sue her father for breach of promise. She says the old gentleman first gave his consent, and then refused to, and that her beau, having got tired of waiting, has gone after another girl.

☞ A Sunday-school teacher of many years' experience has arrived at the conclusion that the only way to keep an infant class perfectly quiet, is to supply each member with unlimited quantities of molasses candy.

☞ A Peoria letter-carrier, after walking nine miles and delivering the same letter to 137 men, none of whom would receive it, sat down on a fire-plug and wept because Pocahontas was such a fool as to catch the old man's war club. The letter was directed to Mr. Smith.

☞ The Russian Grand Duke has been ordered by his father to take another tour around the world.

☞ In Liverpool, the other day, a man smashed a jeweller's window in order to get into jail. He said he was starving, and had been refused admission to one of the workhouses.

☞ Exhibitions of human monstrosities or deformed persons has been prohibited in Japan.

☞ Tears of rage and mortification coursed down the cheeks of a newly-married lady in Illinois, recently, when she beheld the presents given her by her father. They consisted of a wash-tub, axe, three flat-irons and a collection of baking dishes and saucepans. It was not their value she despised, but the meaning they conveyed.

☞ A remarkable instance of the influence of discipline in the Russian army is said to have occurred recently at a fire in the small town of Bardosek, where 192 houses were burned. A sentinel who was on duty, having been forgotten, remained at his post. His watch-box was consumed, and his clothes were already on fire, when a corporal arrived to relieve him. The Emperor, upon hearing of the circumstance, sent the man fifty roubles, decorated him with the Order of St. Anne, and gave instructions for him to be made a non-commissioned officer.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ A Reading couple celebrated their golden wedding on Christmas day.

☞ An Alabama editor offers to name his baby after the patron who will pay his subscription the longest time in advance.

☞ The model woman lives in Des Moines, Iowa. She is now getting her fifth winter out of the same bonnet.

☞ Danbarton, N. H., claims a niche in the temple of fame on account of the possession of a petrified hog.

☞ A Kentucky lady recently recovered $10,000 damages from an inconstant lover.

☞ The Salt Lake Tribune lately received a communication, the writer threatening to shoot the editor on sight if it was not published.

☞ A needy man in San Francisco was recently compelled to pawn his set of false teeth.

☞ A frugal agriculturist in Connecticut recently charged the friends who attended his daughter's wedding for their dinner and horse feed.

☞ A somnambulist at Elkhart, Ind., lately climbed to the top of a hundred-foot chimney and came down safely, while fast asleep.

☞ A young lady at Athol, Mass., has a tame duck, which follows his mistress about like a dog. It escorts her to church on Sunday, and remains outside until the service is over, when it escorts her back home.

☞ At Elk Neck, Md., recently, a boy six years old revenged himself for the indignity of a maternal switching by burning down his father's chaff house and straw-stack.

☞ The residence of the ex-Imperial family of France at Chiselhurst, England, is said to have made that neighborhood fashionable, and to have largely increased the value of adjoining property.

☞ A ladies' club in London is about breaking up, the members being hopelessly divided on the great question as to the propriety of using sealing-wax for ordinary business letters.

☞ The big rhinoceros, the pride of the London Zoological Gardens, is no more. He succumbed to a severe attack of indigestion, and died in the bosom of his family. He leaves a widow and an infant son to mourn his loss.

☞ At Montreal, recently, the large bell of one of the churches relieved itself from a state of suspension while being rung, and crashed through the ceiling, landing in the vestibule, and jarring the whole building.

☞ A Cincinnati matron says there is not a fashionable girl in that city but would rather stay away from church than be seen wearing a pair of single-button gloves.

☞ A flash of lightning was recently measured by a French scientist, and found to be ten and a half miles long.

☞ A postal-card passed through the West Leroy (Mich.) office a few days ago, upon which was written 1062 words.

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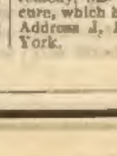

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THE COMING OF PRINTZ.

[A colony of Swedes established themselves upon the shores of the Delaware about fifty years before the arrival of William Penn, who obtained much of his land from them. John Printz, an officer in the Swedish army, I believe, was for some years Governor of the Province.]

I.

A light of colors 'twixt the capes,—
  Of red and blue and gold,
The flag of a far land which shapes
  Its folds through northern cold.
Dark lies the night of Sweden o'er
  Homes left behind the sea,
How fair the lengths of sunny shore
  That in those zones can be,
How as in everlasting dreams
  The waters lie before,
A land like Paradise it seems
  To Printz the Governor!

II.

A soldier he, his face is stern
  From red fields in the north,
He fights where'er his colors burn,
  For king, and country's worth.
The light of seas is in his eyes,
  Bred from old Viking blood;
Like to those bright-haired sires he hies
  Unto the warmer flood.
Strange scents come to him o'er the sands,
  And banks of salty weed,
Where on his vessel's deck he stands,
  Brown hand upon his sword.

III.

Loud sing the seamen from the soils
  Old songs of quest and war,
Quaint melodies set unto tales
  Of sea-kings gone before.
In groups the Swedish farmers smile,
  And stroke the yellow beard;
And sweetest maidens lift awhile
  Sweet children to be cheered.
No longer through the water runs
  The green brine of the bay,
Fresh from a land of springs and suns
  The river flows its way.

IV.

Some figures stand upon the shore,
  Strange in brown skins and paint,
Wild as the untouched forest o'er,
  Which knoweth no restraint.
Yet friendly is the martial hand
  Of Printz the Governor,
Like brother steps he on their land,
  Buys what they will, no more.
Fair dreams his banner o'er the drum
  Which beats no cruel tilt,
Where on the isle of Tinicum
  His lordly hall is built.

A. P.

The Legend of a Seaport Town.

BY CHERRY JAMES.

Our narrative dates back to the fourteenth century. At that time Plymouth, in England, was an inconsiderable seaport hamlet, but it gave frequent harborage to the Dutch traders that then stubbornly contended for ocean supremacy with their formidable rivals, the English merchant fleets. Among the most notable craft finding refuge in Plymouth harbor was the staunch ship Gotfreid, hailing from Amsterdam; she was notable not simply because of herself, though she was the trimmest, speediest and luckiest trader in riding gales on the seas, but mostly because of her captain. If once encountered, Captain Fenwick was not readily forgotten, and particularly among all who had sailed with him, were remembrances of him tenaciously retained. A great, herculean giant, nearly seven feet in height, and with shoulders and limbs like an Ajax, his strength was prodigious and his self-will quite as strong. In port there seemed no milder-mannered, more harmless man living. With smile and words that were always gentle there, and with never a sign of ruffled temper, those who came in contact with him put him down in their estimation for a great, good-hearted, pleasant fellow, who possessed too soft a nature to ever use his prodigious strength for any other purpose than acts of kindness and charity.

But once at sea, once beyond the sniff of shore breezes, the whole nature of the man changed, as every sailor could testify who had been won over by his smooth, suave speech and manner on shore into shipping once with him—and none ever cared to sail more than once with him. A good seaman and an expert navigator, he was, nevertheless, a monster of cruelty upon his own decks, where he knew that his own will must be accepted by all as undisputed authority. Besides, if any felt like resisting his tyranny, the fact of his tremendous strength, and that he was always on his guard against mutineers, restrained them from making their positions worse. Captain Fenwick, however, like most great, burly, brutal monsters, visited his fierce outbursts of temper and acts of cruelty not upon the stronger men of his crew, but selected the weaker and most helpless for his victims.

On one of the Gotfried's voyages from Amsterdam to Plymouth, there had shipped with her a fair-haired, handsome, womanish-looking lad of about sixteen years. It was the the boy's first experience before the mast, and, besides, he was faint and weak, and could evidently be of little service. The captain, who was short of hands for the voyage, realized this when he accepted the lad with a quiet smile of deep satisfaction after listening to his story of how he had accompanied his father, who was a welder of iron at Plymouth, to Amsterdam, in search of wealthy relatives living somewhere near that city; how his father suddenly sickened and died, leaving him penniless and among strangers, and how his one yearning desire now was to get back to his native country again.

During the first days of the Gotfreid's voyage, Herman Wills, the young English lad, suffered severely from sea-sickness, and as he at once became a pet and protégé of the sturdier members of the crew, he was permitted to rest in his bunk while others performed his share of the duties. He therefore knew but little of what was transpiring on board, and did not understand the whispered remarks among the seamen that he overheard about the awful goings-on on the quarter-deck. He had just fully recovered from his sea sickness, and was about to enter upon his laborious duties before the mast, when he was greatly delighted by information that the captain had appointed him to the position of his cabin-boy, and wished him to enter upon his duties at once. He was surprised, though, to perceive with what sad shakes of the head and serious, pitying looks his fellow-seamen, who had been so kind to him, received this intelligence. One of them, bolder than the rest, explained to him the cause of this.

"You see," he said, "a hint to you may be of service. The cap'n's temper ain't always the best, and he's apt when he's angry to cuff people around a little. T'other night there was some sort of an awful fuss in the cabin, and when mornin' came the cap'n's cabin-boy had disappeared. That's why he's taken you under his charge. But oh, Lord," added the poor fellow in fright, "don't let the cap'n know I suspects him of puttin' t'other boy out of the way."

Herman smilingly assented. In his brief conversation with the captain before shipping on the Gotfreid, he had been charmed with the kind, sympathizing manner of that person, and he was positive the suspicions of the sailors were quite unfounded, and that he would have an easy berth and a kind master. Nothing occurred the first day of his new duties to disenchant him of this belief. On the second day, a wild stormy one, that occasioned the Gotfreid to roll violently, the captain ordered Herman to bring him some warm water from the cook's galley to mix with his rum. He was on the deck a minute after, when he noticed the lad passing near him.

"Where is the warm water?" he questioned smilingly, as he saw an empty pitcher in Herman's hand.

"I fell, crossing the deck, and spilled it. I am returning for more," Herman explained.

"Here, my boy," the captain added, quietly, "let me give you a lesson in keeping your feet henceforth."

Quick as the shot from a gun and almost with equal force, his huge fist flew out into the lad's face, hurling him senseless and bleeding to the deck. Turning calmly on his heel, as if nothing unusual had occurred, he walked away a few paces, returning again to the spot as two of the pitying sailors were mercifully stooping to carry the unconscious form of the poor victim away.

"By whose orders do you interfere with that creature?" he demanded, fiercely.

"We follow the orders of mercy," one of the men was inconsiderate enough to say.

"Ha! Follow mine only hereafter," was the captain's answer as his tremendous foot launched out against the poor fellow's ribs, crushing them in and hurling him, too, senseless on the deck, while his messmate fared nearly as bad from the tyrant's fists.

With a loud murmur of indignation the crew sprang threateningly toward the captain. Quietly producing and levelling a pistol in each hand, he sneeringly said—

"It is probably as well, my men, that we should understand each other at once. This lad's father many years ago did me a mortal injury by marrying the girl whom I loved. I then vowed vengeance against both; I have been robbed of it by their deaths, but their son lives and is in my power, and I shall at last have my revenge. Now, I shall make a fair compact with you. I shall not permit any interference in my designs upon this boy; and let me assure you the punishment he has received is light to that which shall follow it; while you mind your own affairs, you will have no reason to complain of my treatment of you, but attempt to meddle in my matters, and by the good St. Gotfreid! some of you will make a meal for fishes before we reach our destination."

No man, however brave, cares to face certain death when he can avoid it, and the crew sullenly fell back from the muzzles of the pistols in the hands of the brutal monster.

From that date, Captain Fenwick proved himself capable of acts of cruelty to the helpless English lad, that sickened every heart on board but his own feelingless one. Every torture, short of actual life-taking, that the most pitiless nature could invent, he visited upon the poor frail, blackened, bruised and mangled form of the lad until the poor creature, crazed by his sufferings, would crawl to the feet of his persecutor, and, kissing them, plead for mercy. The crew, cowed and fearful, occasionally dared to murmur, but always such retribution came upon these grumblers from the tyrant over them, that it struck terror to them.

The Gotfreid had a stormy but prosperous voyage, sighting the gray cliffs guarding Plymouth harbor one beautiful morning when all nature was at peace. The demon of cruelty in Captain Fenwick's heart seemed lashed to a greater fury by the loveliness around him; and with a fierceness in his eye that betrayed fearful things, he ordered the crew up to attend punishment.

The crew tremblingly obeyed the order, for it was evident from the preparations that something more horrible than had yet occurred was about to happen. A brazier of hot coals, in which several irons were glowing in the heat, was brought to the main-mast, and a few moments after, the poor, beaten, bruised, disfigured form of the once handsome, happy English lad, was led up. He had been stripped to the waist, and suddenly there burst upon the horrified crew and the victim himself the hellish purpose of the captain.

The boy was to be branded! his tender flesh burnt by the hot irons!

A yell of agony from the lad and a deep moan of horror from the crew sounded simultaneously.

"Stand back," fiercely exclaimed Captain Fenwick, making his appearance, "I will apply the irons with my own hands."

The sailors fell back, huddling together. A quick whisper passed from one to another; in another instant they would have sprung, regardless of consequences, upon the tyrant, but in that instant the boy forever saved them from the dangerous act. Springing from those who held him, he clambered up the mast, and along the mainyard to its uttermost point. Clinging there a moment in an awful silence from those below, he shouted back.

"Farewell forever, Captain Fenwick. Be assured if there is power in the dead to visit punishments on their persecutors, a merciless fate will not be long in overtaking you."

"Hold! By the fiends I cannot lose my revenge so! A fortune to him who secures the boy," shouted the tyrant captain, springing into the rigging himself.

He shouted in vain. Ere he had finished speaking, his victim leaped from his perch into the sea, and disappeared in its depths.

The rage of Captain Fenwick was fearful when he realized that the boy was certainly drowned, and forever beyond his cruelties. He paced the deck of his vessel like a veritable fiend; and any of his crew so unfortunate as to cross his path, was certain to be the recipient of a blow or a kick that felled him bleeding at his feet.

No crew was ever more rejoiced than that of the Gotfreid as she dropped anchor in Plymouth harbor. The captain, who was still in a fierce rage, immediately ordered a boat lowered to convey him ashore.

The tide was just beginning to roll in shore as Captain Fenwick stepped on the long, old-fashioned quay, paved with stone, stretching from the water's edge at low tide up a steep ascent to the row of humble stone mercantile warehouses bordering the principal business street of the old town. A few idle loungers and merchants gathered near the boat as it touched the quay, recognizing the herculean captain of the Gotfreid in the new arrival, and anticipating from him a hearty welcome and an invitation to adjourn to the nearest inn in the town and join him in a toast over his safe arrival, in accordance with his invariable custom. But for the first time Captain Fenwick failed to assume the calm, unruffled, cheerful temper that he considered a part of his shore toggery; his rage at the escape of Herman Wills, the young English lad, from his cruelties by leaping overboard, was burning fierce as ever, and every person and everything that came in his way was certain to feel the violant effects of his chagrin over his defeated revenge. So with many curses, cuffing and kicking, the gathering crowd, who fell back smarting and dismayed at this strange treatment from their mild, giant friend, he strode fiercely up the quay. He had gone but a few steps, however, when right in his path he half-stumbled over one of the ponderous iron rings fastened at intervals along the face of the quay by staunch staples cemented deep into huge blocks of masonry, these rings being used as a firm fastening for the cables of craft coming near shore to discharge cargo. Angered still more in his furious rage at being almost thrown upon his face by this inanimate obstacle, Captain Fenwick, with a terrible oath and with all his immense strength, launched his tremendous foot encased in its heavy boot against it. It struck fair, entering the ring with such force as to call forth an involuntary yell of pain from the enraged giant; he had severely injured his foot by the fierceness of the blow and he hastily attempted to withdraw it from the iron.

He struggled and tugged, twisted and pulled in vain; the ring would not release it. A single glance at the iron band and then at the huge foot it now clasped in a vice-like grip, would have convinced any that nothing short of a tremendous force—a force compressing flesh and crushing bone—could have driven the huge mass with its leather casing into so small a compass. The size of the iron ring was vastly disproportioned to the size of the ball or broadest part of the foot, nevertheless the foot had entered beyond this and its flesh was beginning to pulp up on all sides of the encircling iron. The cold sweat of agony gathered on the face of Captain Fenwick as he tugged and twisted his limb in vain, loading the air with his wild profanities, and threatening direst vengeance upon the grinning crowd that in the meantime looked on from a distance with evident amusement at the silly trap the captain's rage had got him into.

"Cut off thy boot, man—cut off thy boot," exclaimed a new-comer, rushing upon the scene and taking in the condition of the entrapped man at a glance. He hastened forward despite the warning cry of the crowd, to carry out his own instructions, and coming in reach of the fierce captain, received a blow from his powerful fist that made him retreat howling with pain. But the captain acted upon the advice thus given him, cutting away the leather, and then hurling his knife at the crowd. A single effort to withdraw the puffed and swollen mass of flesh, now almost concealing the iron band clasping it, drew forth a howl of pain from the imprisoned monster, while for the first time a look of terror settled over his face. This was deepened a few moments later by a great wave of water washing up among his feet. The people gathered around saw where the wave reached to; suddenly their merriment gave way to looks of horror, as they crowded up nearer, shouting to the captain—

"The tide is coming in! You will be drowned if you do not let us take some means to help you."

"Curses on the tide—curses on you all!" he fiercely hissed, frothing at the mouth in his wild rage. "Think you I, who have strength equal to a dozen of you, mean to be drowned here like a dog? I will not only show you that I can release myself, but teach you as well how I can crush half of you lifeless as an end of your sport."

The immense form looked like a veritable demon capable of anything in his maddening fury, and the spectators fell back in fright. But though he twisted and pulled, though he bent all his tremendous strength to the effort till his face grew purple and his veins stood out above his flesh like whipcords in the agony he suffered, the iron band held its grasp and the foot was still firmly imprisoned. Resting a little to regain his strength, another and another effort he put forth, but all in vain.

And all this time the returning tide was washing higher and higher up the quay in great threatening waves, driving back the gaping spectators and crawling up, up, up the limbs of the imprisoned man, covering the staunch iron ring and the mass of flesh and bone gorged into it, and piling an increasing flood of water each moment upon them.

"Let us saw the iron through; let us dig up the block of granite that it is anchored to," were some of the suggestions offered by the crowd of people that now looked on in deepest consternation. They all were answered by deeper revilings and oaths from Captain Fenwick.

"If I had a gill of rum to take the chill of this freezing water out of my veins, I could burst the accursed iron by a single effort," he boasted in his wild ravings.

A dozen men rushed to get the liquor; one brought it to him through the stretch of water, already reaching to his knees, and gulping it down at a single swallow, he rewarded his benefactor by throwing the empty mug at his head. Then gathering his nerves for the immense effort he had threatened, he labored for several anxious minutes, until utterly exhausted, he moaned out his defeat. The iron ring still held its relentless grasp.

"The attempt is useless," a voice from the assembled people shouted, as he was preparing for another effort. "A Samson could not break the band asunder, for old John Wills, the iron-worker, never welded those rings for man-power to shatter."

"John Wills! Furies! who dare mention his name where I am? What can he have to do with these accursed irons?" fairly shrieked Captain Fenwick, as he cursed and struggled like a madman.

"Old John Wills forged and welded the iron into shape with his own hands, and fastened it to its present place, just as he did with all the other cable fastenings on the quay," answered the voice, while others joined in to corroborate the statement.

Those simple words worked a fearful change in the boasting man. An awful look of terror settled on his face, and he began to tremble in every limb as he screamed, half defiantly, half pleadingly—

"It is a lie! a miserable lie to excite my terror! Oh, tell me that John Wills had no hand in forging this accursed iron! Have pity on my suffering, and tell me true."

The people looked at each other amazed at this sudden spasm of fear in the fierce, powerful captain. They all knew that John Wills, the citizen of a score of years among them, and the honest welder of iron, who had gone from their midst to some foreign country, taking his handsome fair-haired boy with him, had made the rings of iron that were placed along the quay front; but what connection could this fact have with the accident to Captain Fenwick? they questioned. The imprisoned captain heard their surmises in a pitiable terror, and realizing the truth of all he had feared to know, he more wildly than ever struggled against the band holding him among the fast gathering waters; he wrung his hands, wept and tore at his hair and clothing in his wild despair, shrieking out—

"Save me, oh, save me! It is the murdered boy's curse. John Wills is revenging his son's death. See, I must soon drown; in mercy's name have pity on me—help me to escape the avenger's clutches!—the awful curse!"

The people of the town gathered there shrank back fear-stricken at his frenzy and his strange words. He held out his hands pleadingly to the boat's crew that had come off the Gotfreid with him, and who, silent and stern, had stood aloof unpityingly all this time witnessing their captain's helplessness. Now, they drew farther away from his pleading looks, with a fearful depth of superstitious horror and repugnance in their faces. The spectators gathered around them for an explanation, and to these they revealed the tale of their captain's horrible cruelties upon the helpless fair-haired English lad, Herman Wills, and of his victim's leap into the ocean to escape from fiercer tortures and his last strange words of threatened death to his persecutor.

A deep moan of horror burst from every listener, mingling with the pleading cries, prayers and shrieks of the terror-stricken, imprisoned man.

"The curse of the murdered boy is being fearfully fulfilled through the work of his father's hands," they all solemnly and tremblingly declared. "Accursed will be the life of him who interferes."

The tide rolled in with a pitiless roar and rumble, reaching to the shoulders of the powerful man, now helpless to escape its fury, helpless to do aught but keep his head above it. Shrill above its noise came his piercing wailings for succor, his shrieks of agony and his wild cursings at the awful fate overtaking him. Out on the shoreward margin of the swelling tide, a surging mass of humanity watched the struggling man without putting forth an effort to save him. Those who will wonder must remember that we write of a superstitious age.

A mightier tidal wave than any which had preceded it, rolled shoreward. Over the head of the imprisoned giant it fiercely broke. A shriek, so wild and piercing in its agony that those who heard it never forgot its awful curdling effect upon their blood, broke above the water's roar. A few gurgling bubbles marked for some minutes the place where the terrified face of the captain of the Gotfreid had last been seen, and then—all was still!

When the tide flowed out, hours after, almost the first to look upon the pinched, horror-stricken face of the drowned tyrant, was the fair-haired English lad, Herman Wills. He had been picked up out of the ocean while floating on a piece of wreck by a vessel bound in.

The cruel captain of the Gotfreid was buried with the iron ring still firmly clasping his foot. There was no hand in all Plymouth so free from superstitious fear as to be bold enough to remove it.

☞ BEAUTY.—I have come to the conclusion, if man, or woman either, wishes to realize the full power of personal beauty, it must be by cherishing noble hopes and purposes; by having something to do, and something to live for, which is worthy of humanity, and which, by expanding the capacities of the soul, gives expansion and symmetry to the body which contains it.—*Prof. Upham.*

☞ CHARMS OF NOVELTY.—Novelty has charms that our minds can hardly withstand. The most valuable things, if they have for a long while appeared among us, do not make any impression as they are good, but give us a distaste as they are old. But when the influence of this fantastical humor is over, the same men or things will come to be admired again, by a happy return of our good taste.—*Thackeray.*

ALIKE IN APE-PEARANCE.

CHILD.—"Oh, ma! look at that horrid ugly ape!"
MAMMA.—"Be quiet, child; papa might hear you!"

"THE GIRL I LEAVE BEHIND ME."

The boat is loosened from the strand,
  And cleaves her liquid way;
Now faint appears the distant land,
  Like morn's first shadows gray;
But oh, there is one gentle tie,
  Which fain would firmly bind me;
May Heaven protect with watchful eye
  The girl I leave behind me!

Still do I fix my lingering gaze
  On that fast fading shore,
While memory muses upon days
  That may return no more.
Ah! little deemed I that the spell
  Of Love so firm could bind me;
May Heaven in mercy cherish well
  The girl I leave behind me!

Love! 'tis the beacon light of Life,
  On fleing's troubled ocean—
That glide its maddened waves of strife,
  And calms their rude commotion;
And while its beam doth constant burn,
  Though storms and tempests find me,
My faithful soul shall ever turn
  To her I leave behind me!

One last look—ah! that billow's swell
  Hath snatched it from my vision—
Where all my fondest treasures dwell,
  And Beauty's smile elysian:
Still of that shore with fond regret,
  Shall memory oft remind me,
Nor ever can my heart forget
  The girl I leave behind me!

Star of my hope! thy cheery ray
  Still o'er my path be smiling,
Illumine all Life's gloomy way,
  My breast of woe beguiling!
And then when Earth, and earthly care,
  And Hope, have all resigned me,
Kind Heaven shall hear my latest prayer
  For her I leave behind me!

Mrs. Appletop's Soliloquy.

I am Mrs. Appletop: don't suppose you know me, but I'm a great hand to become acquainted with folks. I love to mix around in society, and see who everybody is, and what they are doing; and I make a point of doing so on every occasion. Mrs. Jumpup says my name should have been Mrs. Busybody; she says I'm not only a busybody, but a meddlesome one. But everybody knows what Mrs. Jumpup is—who cares for her long tongue; she's just mad because she's not such a useful member of society as I am. She's always talking about somebody—that's something I never do; if I can't speak well of anyone, I hold my tongue; pity there ain't more like me. I'd rather Mrs. Jumpup should talk about me as she does, however, than not to notice me at all. I don't want to be nobody—that I don't.

She says I know everybody's business—and so I do. How am I to do my duty through life as a useful member of society, if I don't find that out, I'd like to know? Yes, I congratulate myself this place would be very different, were it not for me. I was born and raised here, and I take an interest in everybody. Were it not for me, there would be an everlasting quarrel going on. I am the universal peace-maker. When I hear anybody backbiting another, I go straight to that other and let him know it; then there is a meeting, sharp words, etc., and no more is heard about it. Once when I told Mrs. Samson what Mrs. Smith said about her, Mr. Samson called Mr. Smith out and gave him a beautiful thrashing; that taught Mrs. Smith a lesson—she quit her backbiting.

I thought a great deal of Mrs. Samson—and anybody I like I always interest myself in their welfare. Now there was poor little Floy Hart—she was a mighty nice tender little thing. I found out from Floy she was going to marry Dick Brown. Well, Dick was pretty good-looking, but he was nothing but a little, old one horse storekeeper. I knew Floy would be carrying her ducks to a poor market if she had him, so I determined to save Floy. I studied and studied about it, and at last an idea jumped in my head. I sat down and wrote a mighty loving letter to an old beau of Floy's, making all sort of fun of Dick. Then I signed Floy's name, sealed it, and—through mistake, you know—ahem—directed it to Dick. Dick got it, and such a rumpus I never heard of. Floy vowed she didn't write it; Dick wouldn't believe her. He broke off the engagement right away and left the country. That was just what I wanted, and I knew I had done my duty. She loved the fellow though, I'm sure. She didn't live very long afterward. She was a delicate little thing anyway, poor girl. I went to see her after she was laid out, and I think she was the prettiest corpse I ever did see. And there was no one shed more tears than I did. Dick got back just in time to see her laid in her grave, and the fellow made a perfect fool of himself. I offered him all the consolation in my power, told him sooner or later we all had to go there—in the grave you know—and a lot more things. He got over it at last and went back to his storekeeping; and you see if it hadn't been for me, Floy would be his wife now, tied down to that little old storehouse. Poor thing, she'd better be in Heaven.

Mrs. Jumpup says I'm just as deceitful as I can be, too, just because I make a point of kissing my friends; she needn't say nothing; it goes mightily against the grain when I kiss her. It's more policy in me than love. I don't care three straws for none of 'em, but it makes one popular, and what is life without popularity?

Goodness gracious, if there don't go Mrs. Barton down street with young Goodall. It's outrageous, the way she goes on; what can Mr. Barton be thinking of? I'll bet he don't know it. I'll put a flea in his ear—it's my duty. They don't get on like angels, anyway. I don't see any sense in married folks quarrelling, and so I told Mrs. Barton. She said there wouldn't be so much of it done if some folks didn't meddle in what didn't concern 'em. She's a queer woman.

Land sakes! what's all that hollerin' about? Goodness, let me get to the door. There's always a thousand chairs and things in my way. Oh, dear! why it's a fight, a real fight, such a crowd. Joe Sniffles and Tom Hanson—knives, sleeves rolled up, and coats off. Oh, one of 'em will be killed, and maybe they'll bring them in here. Did you ever? My heart's all a tremble. I do wonder which will beat! Why what are they doing now—why if they haven't taken their knives away from 'em—separated them. There they go back. Pshaw! it's too bad. They're not going to fight after all.

DAISY BURNS.

☞ LOOK WELL TO THE END.—Young man, look well to the end. Before beginning, look well to the end to which this beginning is likely to lead; and when once begun, have a care until that end has been consummated. Let not intermediate successes engender a carelessness which will cause the final accomplishment of the whole design to slip through your fingers.

☞ DEFINITION OF GENTLENESS.—Gentleness, which belongs to virtue, is to be carefully distinguished from the mean spirit of cowards, and the fawning assent of sycophants. It renounces no just right from fear; it gives up no important truth from flattery; it is, indeed, not only consistent with a firm mind, but it necessarily requires a manly spirit and a fixed principle, in order to give it any real value.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

We cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscripts.

"WORRIED ONE," (Philada.) We sympathize with you. Consult a physician—not a quack. Your case is not an unusual one, and you may be benefited if you are patient and faithful in following sound medical advice.

J. H. G., (York, Pa.,) asks: "What nations were the first to engage in commerce? and what others soon followed?" Commerce, by which term is meant the interchange of commodities, is as old as the commencement of civilization. When it began is unknown; the oldest writings we have, show that it was in a state almost as perfect as it now is fifteen centuries before the beginning of authentic profane history. The transaction between Abraham and Ephron implies a fixed condition of trade. Abraham paid for the field of Machpelah in silver money that was current with the merchants. Hamor, the Hivite prince, speaks of allowing the sons of Jacob to trade in land. Egypt was the seat of a great commerce forty centuries, and all the modes of trade were then ancient and established. The Phœnicians were among the people earliest distinguished in commerce. The Carthaginians, Phœnicians by origin, were also early renowned for their commercial greatness.

SINCE replying recently, to a correspondent who inquired of us which was the largest piece of ordnance in the world, we have learned that a gun has just been cast at the West Point foundry, exceeding in weight the one we named. This new gun is known as the Sutcliffe, and is the largest ever made. Its weight in the rough was 72,000 pounds. It is made of iron, except that it has a steel barrel, four inches thick at the breech, and three at the muzzle. The shot will be nine inches in diameter, and will weigh about 250 pounds—not so heavy as some projectiles used by other large guns, but expected to prove as destructive.

J. De N., (Ohio,) asks: "1st. Would you advise a young lady of delicate health to learn book-keeping; would it pay her, and could she find employment readily? 2d. What course of reading would you advise for a young lady? What books both of prose and poetry? Which one of Dickens's works is considered the best? 3d. In entering and departing from church, public halls, from hotels and their dining-rooms, etc., etc., should the lady precede the gentleman or vice-versa? 4th. In ascending and descending stairways which should go first, the lady or her attendant? 5th. Where a lady stops at a hotel for dinner only, should she remove her hat on entering the dining-room, or simply throw off her cloak or shawl?" 1st. It is about the last thing we would advise her to do. Her health would be apt to suffer still more, and no pay that she might receive could reimburse her for the loss of that. She would probably have great difficulty in finding a place, and if she obtained one would not receive large pay. 2d. The mass to choose from is so vast that it is bewildering to decide. History, biography—especially of distinguished women—the best essays and criticisms, choice fiction and miscellaneous reading should form a part of the course. Among the poets, the acquaintance of Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, and our native writers of verse should be made. Travels and descriptions of natural scenery should also be read. Fredrika Bremer's "Homes of the New World," and Grace Greenwood's "New Life in New Lands," are charming works of this character. In conclusion, we would advise every young lady not to neglect the Cook-Book and other writings on domestic subjects. David Copperfield is regarded by some as the masterpiece of Dickens. It was the author's favorite work also. 3d. The gentleman should precede the lady, if it is not possible for them to be abreast. 4th. The rule is for the gentleman to precede the lady in ascending stairways, and to follow her in descending. 5th. It is best to remove the hat also. Only at restaurants is it permissible by the rules of good-breeding to retain it or bet head when at the table.

ROVER, (Fayetteville, N. C.,) asks: "1st. I have a great attachment for a young lady, but am almost a total stranger to her. I have never had an introduction to her, nor do I see any chance of getting one. Would it be improper for me to write to her and declare my feeling for her? 2d. Do you think the war with Spain at an end? 3d. How is Cespedes pronounced? 4th. Do you think Cuba will gain her independence without the aid of some other power? 5th. Is the Labor Reformer a strong party in any of the States. 6th. What would be the cost of a magic lantern, with scenes for parlor entertainment? Where could I get one? 7th. What of my handwriting and spelling for a one-horse man who never went to school a day? My age is nineteen. What are its faults?" 1st. It would be very improper to write to her with such an introduction, and very surprising to her, we should imagine, without having obtained an introduction. Do not, by your precipitancy, make it more difficult to obtain her favor when an opportunity to form her acquaintance does offer. If you are terribly in earnest, lay the case before some relative of hers. 2d. It looks so. 3d. Webster says—Tues'-de-zhen with accent on first syllable, and the e's all short. 4th. We fear not very soon. 5th. We judge not. 6th. The price of a magic lantern is from $1 to $25, according to size and excellence. Any dealer in optical instruments could furnish you with one. 7th. Your handwriting (if you write with your left hand, as we infer you do,) is tolerable, but if you were careful, might, we think, be made much better. As to your spelling, you could do spell as well with but one arm as with two.

GREGAN, (N. Y.,) writes: "Can any chemist friend of yours inform me how to eradicate a rank or rancid taste, some butter is possessed of? If not troubling you too much, I should feel extremely obliged to receive an answer through your 'Correspondents' column.' Any chemical process which your good selves might think of, I would feel disposed to try." We do not believe in removing rancidity from butter by any chemical process. The best way would be to keep the cream/cream out in the first place; if that has not been done, and cannot be done, then let the butter be sold for what it is, without resorting to the use of any possibly poisonous agents to disguise or "correct" the ill taste, odor and quality.

ENQUIRER asks: "1st. What would be the cheapest and quickest route from Wheeling, W. Va., to Jacksonville or St. Augustine, Fla.? 2d. What would be the cost of such a journey? 3d. Where, and at what price, can I procure a reliable work on the climate and resources of Florida? 4th. How is my handwriting?" 1st. Your best plan would be to take the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to Washington. From the Capital there is direct railroad communication with Savannah, without change of cars. Jacksonville can be reached from Savannah by the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad and its connections. The cost of the whole journey you can ascertain by applying at the ticket office in Wheeling. A sea voyage, after reaching the coast, would be cheaper, but much slower than by rail. 2d. Write to some prominent bookseller in Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., or Claxton, Remsen & Co. 3d. Good.

CHESS, (Enon, Pa.,) writes: "Can you inform me whether there is any book or paper published that devotes part of its contents to chess and checker-playing? Can you give me the name of any paper or book of the kind, and the price?" There are works devoted to the subject, and the Chess Record, a monthly, is published at 239 Walnut street, Philadelphia.

J. H. S. (Walnut Hills Ohio,) asks: "1st. Will you be so kind as to tell me what is good to whiten linen collars, or put a gloss on them? 2d. Would you call my handwriting very bad?" 1st. To whiten linen, if you can have access to a clean grass plot, there is nothing better than bleaching by exposure to sun and rain thereon. You will also find that a great improvement can be made in washing linen and other white clothes—but not woolens nor calicoes—by adding to five gallons of soft water one-half gallon of lime water, a pint and a half of soft soap and two ounces of carbonate of soda. Spermaceti, in small quantities, used in the starch, is good to give a gloss to collars and shirt fronts. 2d. It is poor, but has the merit of being easily read.

INQUIRER, (Hilanton, N. J.,) asks: "1st. Can you inform me how the term Quaker ever came to be applied to that religious body? 2d. Also where the following couplet can be found?—

"Quakers (who, like lanterns, bear
  Their light within them) will not swear?"

1st. It appears from the "Journal of George Fox" that the Society of Friends, of which he was one of the great organizers, obtained the appellation by which they are now generally known, in 1650, from the following circumstance: "Justice Bennet, of Derby," says Fox, "was the first to call us Quakers, because I bade him quake and tremble at the word of the Lord." 2d. The lines are by Butler, and are to be found in his celebrated satirical poem, "Hudibras."

"1873" (Orion, Ohio,) asks: "Who are or were George Sand and George Eliot? The names are both *nom de plumes*, I believe." The former is the distinguished French authoress, Madame Dudevant. She assumed the name out of attachment to Jules Sand or Sandeau, a young student, in conjunction with whom she published her first work. George Eliot is the *nom de plume* of Mrs. Lewes, a distinguished English authoress.

D. N., (Liberty, Kansas.) There are ten numbers of the Post from Jan. 1st, 1872, containing the story of "Wertzal, the Scout." We are out of several of those numbers.

"READER," (Lambertville, N. J.,) asks: "Is the game called 'Pianchetta' still obtainable; and if so, what is the price?" It is out of date, and not kept for sale as formerly by the toy stores.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]